

# SCHOOL ARTS



Children and Creative Expression

SEVENTY CENTS / SEPTEMBER 1957



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Cover, a Highland Park, Illinois pupil paints with sponge and brush. Second and third graders took part. From article by Marguerite Pearce on page 5.

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# SCHOOL ARTS

## the art education magazine

VOLUME 57, NUMBER 1

SEPTEMBER 1957

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## using this issue

We are beginning a new school year with an issue featuring the theme, *Children and Creative Expression*. Marguerite Pearce, page 5, shows work of second and third graders and discusses how they made these expressive paintings. Jean d'Autilia reports on a study of Clichés in Children's Art on page 9. Ralph M. Pearson, author of *The New Art Education*, discusses child art on page 12. Josefa Kaminski tells how she answers questions of parents on their children's art, on page 15. Elvis Presley has his day in School Arts. An art teacher joined up with the adolescents, and they rocked and rolled their way to a new kind of art experience, page 17. The New York State art director discusses the need for an expanded program of art in the high school, on page 21. School administrators attended a special art workshop in Erie, as reported by George Deimel on page 24. A Danish reader tells about a group project in her class and gives a fine interpretation of the teacher's role in the art class, on page 25. Two articles on clay for children include some warming up ideas by a parent, page 28, and *Clay in the Primary Grades* by George Pappas, on page 29. There are *Here's How* features beginning on page 33. The regular features you like so much are back again: *Understanding Art* on page 39, *Beginning Teacher* on page 47, *Art Films* reviews on page 48, book reviews on page 49, and *Questions You Ask* on page 51.

## NEWS DIGEST

New NAEA officers: Reid Hastie (center), president; Charles Robertson (right), vice-president; and John Lembach (left), secretary-treasurer.



PHOTO COURTESY WILLIAM R. MILLIKEN, JR.



Carol (Kit) Lyons, new editorial secretary, is versatile in the arts.

**Meet Kit, New Editorial Secretary** Carol (Kit) Lyons is our new editorial secretary and general assistant to the editor, succeeding Rita Fritsch, recent mother of a fine new daughter. Mrs. Lyons has, in addition to her secretarial training, a bachelor of arts degree from the University of Maine, where she majored in theatre. She has appeared in stage productions at Buffalo's Studio Theatre as well as the Grand Island Playhouse, where she recently played the female lead in a summer production. She was field director for the Camp Fire Girls in Buffalo for three years and was camp director for two years. She is also a modern dance enthusiast and has appeared with the Buffalo Opera Guild. Her husband, Larry Lyons, is a radio announcer for WEBR of Buffalo. She says to tell you that she loves her new job and finds that the arts are so interrelated that she learns more about acting from the art articles in our offices.

**New Advisory Editors Are Added** After four years with the best group of advisory editors any editor could desire, we are making some changes in order to rotate some of these positions and provide a better distribution geographically and otherwise. New advisory editors include Elizabeth Mack, director of art in Charlotte, North Carolina; Dorothy Calder, art director at Decatur, Georgia, High School; Ralph M. Pearson, author of *The New Art Education*, Nyack, New York; Jean Johnson, supervisor of art education in Dade County, Florida; Pauline Johnson, associate professor of art, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington; and Pauli Tolman, supervisor of art, Los Angeles, California.

**NAEA Seeks an Executive Secretary** The National Art Education Association has appointed a committee headed by Jack Arends to locate an executive secretary, and is now receiving applications. Jack is on the Columbia faculty.





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MARGUERITE PEARCE

*Second and third graders found they could get the effects they wanted when they combined sponge with brush painting in various ways. A truly creative teacher tells how they did it in an Illinois town.*

# PAINTING WITH SPONGE AND BRUSH

We had unusually brilliant and beautiful sunsets early this spring. People asked, "Did you see the sky last night?" and the children began to watch for them. We wanted to paint

the sunsets but found that we got a hard, lined or spotty look with brushes, so we began to use sponges. They were just what we needed. We didn't paint the very sunset we

*Highland Park second and third graders combined sponge painting with brush painting. Sponges helped them paint the skies.*





*Children used both wet and dry paper, and wet and almost dry sponges for different effects in same picture, plus brush work.*



PHOTO BY BOB AUSTIN

saw the night before, but it was a sunset and "came out pretty" nearly every time. We progressed to other subjects, but the sunsets were the favorites. We had used sponges before, somewhat like finger paint, without having a subject. We had also stippled in some backgrounds. This time we used both wet and dry paper and wet and almost dry sponges in the same picture—plus brush work.

We cut cellulose sponges about 2 by 3 inches or smaller—some larger ones for mural backgrounds. Then the children put paint into low containers, as it was too difficult to put the sponges into the paint jars. Next they squeezed water from the sponges or sprinkled or poured it onto the sky and made it very wet. After that the sponges were squeezed almost dry and—dipping into the paint—they spaced the colors around and let them spread and mix. We found that it is important to have the sponge barely damp, because a wet sponge soaked up the paint and made the color weak. Some dipped the sponge into more than one color at a time, sometimes having a different one on each corner of the sponge and turning it to apply the colors. The classes soon found that the sponge had to have pure colors on it and that continuing to apply colors one over the other without clean-



ing the sponge made a muddy-looking sky. A few of these were used for storms, but most of them had to be thrown away and a new start made. Nobody seemed to mind because they were quickly-made pictures and the second ones were always better.

The children said, "You can show swirls of dust or big winds or moods and feelings." Roy said, "This is easy and it looks real, but it gets muddy sometimes." Ann said, "I can make thin lines with the edge of my sponge or press harder and make wide ones." Bob said, "I'm not the best artist in the room, but you don't have to be to get a good sponge painting." When the sky was painted, we left it and roughly sponged in the ground, water and buildings. Some used dry paper and dry sponge for this, getting a nice rough texture, but others kept on with the wet technique. By this time the sky was dry enough to use a brush. The final elements of the picture were put in and showed sharply against the background. This seemed to be the thing that made these pictures different from other sponge paintings. The second and third grades, as usual, were very audible about their pleasure in spacing colors and letting them blend and make pictures they couldn't have painted before. The boys and girls least able to produce a picture before this, were among the most successful and happiest with this method.



PHOTO BY BOB AUSTIN

*We found that it was important to have the sponges barely damp because a wet sponge soaked up paint and made color weak.*





*Sometimes more than one color was used on a sponge at once.*



*Sponge and brush paintings by second and third grade pupils.*



*Marguerite Pearce has given many years of devoted service to art education in District 108, Highland Park, Illinois.*

*Continuing to apply colors one over the other without cleaning sponges made muddy skies. Some of these made storm scenes.*



*Clichés, or stereotyped expressions, have become an increasing problem in the teaching of art. Here is a report on a staff discussion of this problem at the People's Art Center, The Museum of Modern Art.*

# CLICHÉS IN CHILDREN'S ART

In developing children creatively, every art teacher is confronted with the problem of clichés. The most commonly recognized clichés are found in holiday subjects such as the familiar Halloween pumpkins and witches and, of course, the cartoon strip with a Superman, Mickey Mouse, and so forth. Perhaps clichés have always presented a problem to art teachers. However, with the increase in powerful and effective means of communication such as television and comic books, the problem seems to have become greater and more acute. Both at the New Lincoln School, where I taught for four years, and at the People's Art Center, The Museum of Modern Art, where I am now teaching, we found the cliché a recurring problem in working with children, teenagers, or adults.

The matter came up repeatedly in staff meetings of the People's Art Center until we finally agreed that it was sufficiently persistent and general to warrant special study and attention. We recognized right from the start that the underlying causes of clichés and stereotypes were complex and varied in nature and that the study would require a long and continuous undertaking, perhaps by the entire staff working both individually and as a group. A starting point was, however, necessary, and I was delegated to undertake the first step. This was decided on by the staff as a whole and it was simply to try to find out how each of us defined and visualized clichés. The following project was, therefore, carried out.

Each member of the group was asked to evaluate independently a series of children's paintings. Twenty paintings by children from third through eighth grades were selected by another staff member and myself. They were chosen from a school not connected with the Art Center, so that other members of the staff would not be familiar with either the works or the children who made them. This afforded a more objective basis for evaluation.

The paintings ranged from obvious clichés to some which were only questionably cliché in subject, in handling, or in some other elements. It was believed that the staff would agree too readily on obvious extremes, therefore, the majority of the paintings selected were "borderline" cases with the expectation that this would stimulate more thought and

discussion. Each staff member examined the selection independently. If he found evidence of stereotyped or cliché influence in the paintings, he described his reactions and gave his reasons on a form provided. As was anticipated, there was almost unanimous agreement on the few obvious examples. The borderline cases, however, not only produced differing reactions but revealed the need for knowing the history behind each painting and emphasized the danger of easy or quick condemnation of a cliché or stereotype. The basic danger was the possibility of condemning the child along with the work. It was, however, the consensus of opinion that clichés, whatever their sources, are as a rule harmful to the creative growth of most children.

Each member of the staff had the opportunity of examining the written reactions of other teachers first. Then the staff discussed the entire study informally. The discussion was recorded on tape. This allowed for a spirited exchange of ideas in which the spontaneous give and take was much more exciting than any prepared statements could have been. The following remarks by a few of the teachers were taken from the tape.

"The cliché blinds a child from seeing his own way by standing between him and what he's trying to say."

"You can certainly say that a dependence on clichés destroys a child's own sense of observation and perception and the natural growth process which would normally take place."

"Has anyone here found any techniques to help them overcome these things, particularly when a child is imbued with the notion that a cliché is desirable to do? When a child presents a cliché, he's usually pretty firm about it."

Perhaps the outstanding outcome of this experiment was the affirmation that the cliché is an ever-present problem which changes with age levels as well as with times, seasons, and years. The experiment was a first step, but the staff felt that the study which was made and the resulting discussion were of such interest that they should be available to other interested art teachers. This has been done in a publication entitled: "Clichés in Children's Paintings," Pamphlet One, Art Education Study Series. Copies may be secured at 50 cents each by writing to the Department of Education,





The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York.

Shown here are four of the twenty paintings evaluated by the staff and some conclusions and comments made by the teachers. Some paintings were not entirely cliché but showed influences only in parts.

No. 2 by Jackie, age 9 years—"The trees, clouds, and sun are definitely clichés. It is a stereotype use of color: sky, blue; sun, yellow; trees and grass, green. In spite of these parts, there is much childlike expression and charm."

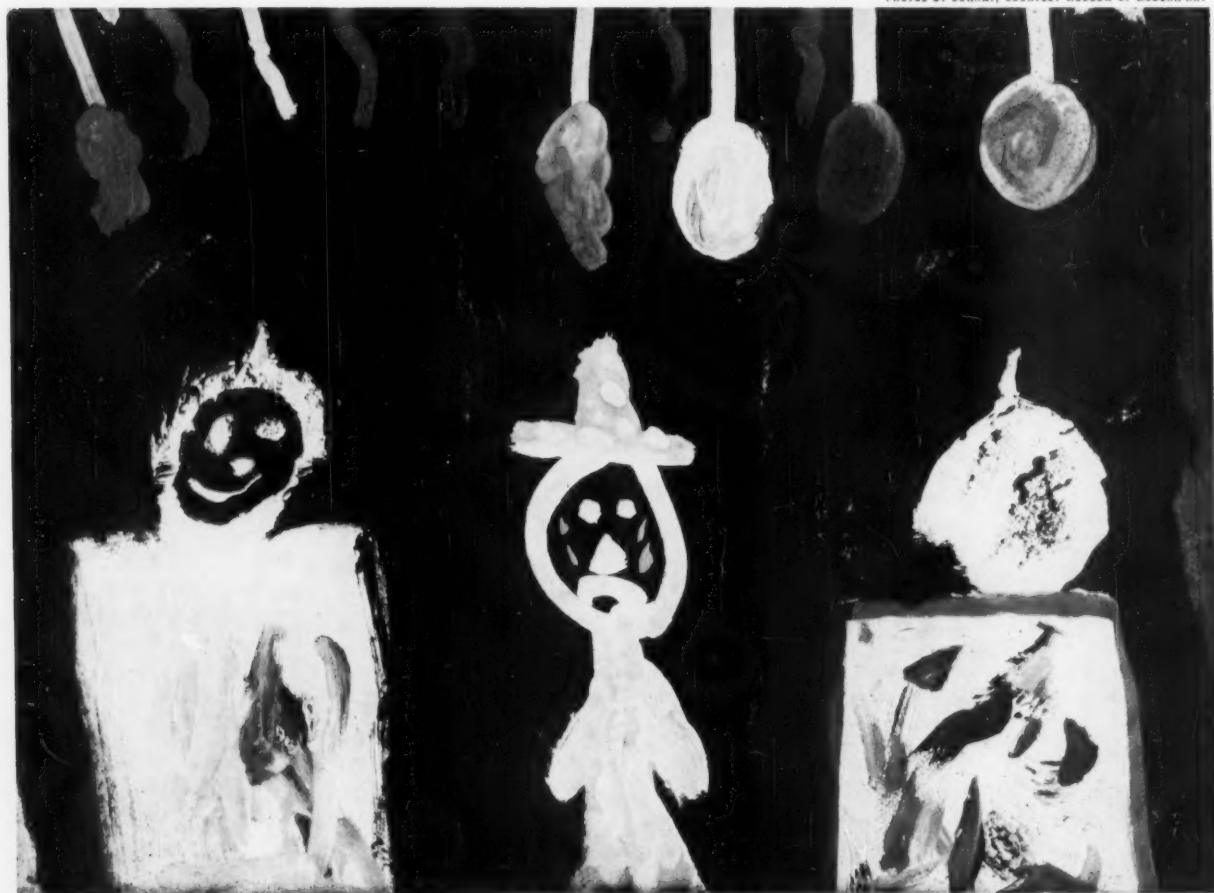
"It seems to me that the animals and ducks in this painting are really freshly seen and painted. The sun symbol and rather stereotyped trees are just a background for what interests the child most. I wouldn't call the entire picture a cliché, but there are cliché elements in it."

Certain hackneyed subjects such as Halloween and Thanksgiving are apt to result in cliché or stereotyped ex-

*Animals and ducks are freshly seen and painted and there is much childlike expression and charm. The sun and trees are stereotyped. Jackie apparently treated them as unimportant background and concentrated his creative efforts elsewhere.*

*Although hackneyed subjects tend to result in stereotypes, Susan handled this subject in a fresh, felt, and original manner. The brushwork is expressive, some color inventive. Even limited subject matter can be treated imaginatively.*

PHOTOS BY SUNAMI, COURTESY MUSEUM OF MODERN ART





pression but even these subjects can be so motivated that the child will interpret them in imaginative and personal ways.

No. 4 by Susan, age 9 years—"It is a cliché in choice of subject, but the cliché ends with the subject. The handling, even within the ghost and pumpkins, is fresh, felt, and original."

"On the whole it is a personal expression with cliché elements like the pumpkin faces and symmetrical arrangement. The brushwork is expressive and some of the color inventive."

It is important to know the child and his previous efforts before any valid judgment of a single work can be made.

No. 8 by Ruth, age 8 years—"I find this clown delightful. It is not a cliché, too much feeling and freedom."

"If this is the first time this child painted this particular picture, it is not a cliché. If she always paints this kind of background, maybe it is

*Ruth's painting appears lively and fresh, with much feeling and freedom. It looks as though she enjoyed making it. If she always paints this kind of a background it may be partly a cliché. Valid judgments cannot be made on a single work.*



partly a cliché. The painting appears lively, fresh, and as though the child enjoyed making it."

Even the most obvious and trite cliché may mask a deep interest on the part of the child. With expert guidance this interest can be revealed and directed in more original expression.

No. 3 by Allison, age 10 years—"This is an impersonal, unfelt, comic-book cliché. The desire to identify with the known, approved, humorous, and powerful is apparent here."

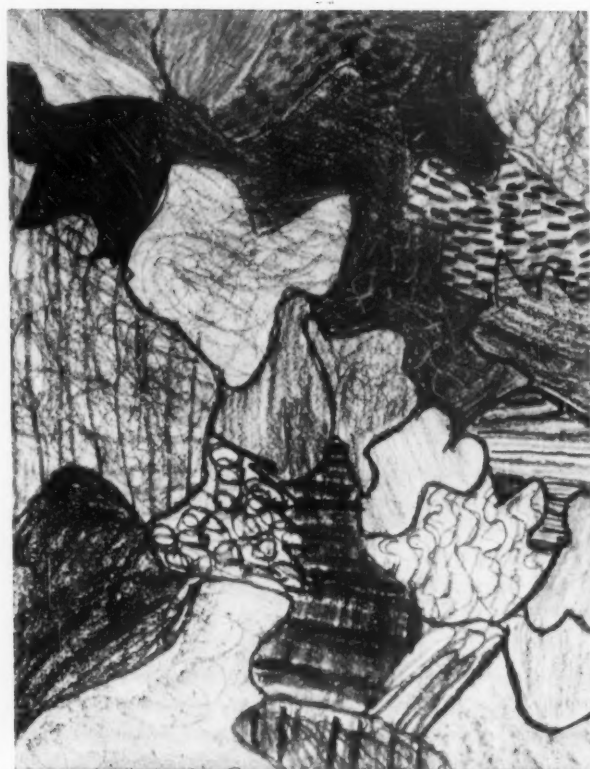
"The face on this creature is borrowed from a stereotype form and is unpleasant to me as an art teacher, not to the child. If, however, the boat and body are the child's own original adaptation of this stereotype, it might be a first step toward more original painting."

Jean d'Autilia is an instructor in children's classes of The People's Art Center, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

*This is an impersonal, unfelt, comic-book cliché, with the face on the creature borrowed from a stereotyped form. If the boat and body are the child's own interpretations of a stereotype it could be the first step toward original work.*



Copies of the publication which gives a complete report on this study may be secured at fifty cents each by writing to the Department of Education, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York 19, New York. Victor D'Amico is director of the education department. This booklet is recommended for the classroom teacher who wishes to know the bases for professional misgivings about holiday work.



*Crayon drawings by Lusette, first grade (left) and Stuart, second grade (right). From Ladue School, St. Louis, Missouri.*

## Children are born creative artists

*Children are naturally creative artists. It is the teacher's task to build on this foundation, not to destroy it. The author of *The New Art Education* discusses the methods of a creative teacher of art.*

**RALPH M. PEARSON**

I have just seen a group of color-crayon drawings by the young children of a certain public grade school in St. Louis, Missouri, and they are so startling in several ways that they demand reporting. But a paradox is involved; one reason why this set is startling is that it should not be startling. Actually it demonstrates that all children can do what these five grades have done. Hence the news value of the exhibit

really lies in the reasons why several million youngsters are not doing every day similar creations. Similar, I mean, in spirit, goals and qualities. Specific results are normally always different with every individual.

What has happened in the Ladue School of St. Louis to get such exciting and potentially normal results? A dedicated woman, who has great respect for the abilities as well as the personalities of children and who has herself experienced the broad reach of the creative art in which she gives pupils guidance—but not dictation—is the art teacher for the first six grades. She teaches entire classes, not just the few "gifted" individuals, the qualities in which lies the art. She does not stress "personality development" as an end; it is a by-product. Her methods consist, not in intellectualizing definitions, but in guidance toward seeing, doing, enjoying and getting excited about the things that constitute the art. To simplify problems, she has the children omit subjects from their pictures until they have absorbed the esthetics. This,

dramatized by the resulting *creations*, is one of the startling events. The name of the dedicated teacher is Myra Johnston. "The reason I feel so deeply about the children's work," says Mrs. Johnston, "is because to me it represents the real sense of beauty that is inherent in mankind before it is all spoiled by civilization."

When left to themselves in their attempts at picture-making, children and adults—naturally try to portray a sub-

ject. "That's what a picture is for, isn't it?" would be an almost universal remark among beginners, if they didn't take it for granted. Mrs. Johnston, and some other creative-minded art teachers, let their students from age six upward in on a great secret; pictures can be "played" exactly as music is played—with color, spaces, textures, etc., taking the place of notes of sound that are arranged into harmonies. The latter please our sensitivities through the sense of hear-

*Imaginative drawing by Betsy, third grade. Unlike usual crayon stereotypes, children used medium in an inventive manner.*

ALL ILLUSTRATIONS FROM LADUE SCHOOL, ST. LOUIS, MYRA JOHNSTON, TEACHER





ing; the former through the sense of seeing. Music does not have to express a theme; dance music, for instance, is quite exciting. Pictures do not have to express a subject; color harmonies are equally exciting—if one is alert to them. Abstract pictures can play dancing rhythms or more complex harmonies with equal zest and pleasure-giving qualities. Or both great media can have a theme or subject. In the case of music, this is generally realized; in the case of pictures, it is still an unrealized secret to millions of people. It is a very sad situation but it exists and has to be taken into account. Mrs. Johnston has initiated her pupils into this mystery and they have responded with a burst of glory that takes the breath of any observer who is alert to what is happening.

The end-product of this initiation into a whole new world of thrills is called, in adult terms, esthetic emotion, the esthetic response to art stimuli. Children will not know what this word "esthetic" means but they can be taught *what it is*. So can adults who, presumably, do know the meaning of the word—in spite of that paradox of our time which includes the fact that many adults, among them a large proportion of professional picture-makers, have not yet discovered this vast field. Some of these professionals merely copy from nature the facts of a beautiful subject, thereby becoming *naturalistic* artists; others (and this is a recent development)

abandon the esthetic disciplines and revel in the chaos of "personality expression" via "emotional release." They overlook the historically demonstrated fact that rioting is not art—in music, in pictures and sculptures, in poetry, drama, the dance or any other medium. Hence one other startling item about these drawings is that some grownups can learn their art ABC's from certain initiated six- to ten-year-olds.

To really perceive what is happening, however, in such creations as are illustrated herewith, is not so simple for the uninitiated. And it is made more difficult when color, the most obvious pleasure-giving ingredient, is eliminated in a black and white reproduction. Therefore some study and some imagination are needed. For instance: Run your eyes over the four illustrations from the first, second, third and sixth grades and note carefully what is happening. All grades are doing the same basic exercise which, to condense its explanation radically, is to take a color crayon and by the "scribble" method play a group of free, happy, reckless, flowing lines over the page. This creates a pattern of unthought-out lines that make linear shapes. These shapes are then filled in with varied colors and textures made by different ways of handling the crayons.

Rarely, except in the primary outlines, is a raw color used—because its effect would be too monotonous, familiar—and *raw*. Instead, all sorts of mixtures are improvised—by scrubbing various crayons into a solid mass or by alternating lines of different colors or by delicate rubbings. Or, one solid mass can be imposed over another, then a knife-blade or other sharp instrument, used to scratch lines through the outer layer exposing the in-under color; this adds a galaxy of sharp-line effects to the grainy ones of the crayons themselves. But the crayons give endless variety just by the way they are handled—sweeps, scrubbing, smudges, fine and coarse lines, curlicues, jabs, criss-cross, side-rubbings, etc. It is these controlled effects that constitute the "visual music."

One major point needs stressing. These varied devices for getting effects are in themselves technical matters. They only enter the art arena when an artist makes use of them for his high purposes, when he manipulates them in unique ways which transform them from raw materials into purposeful, emotionally moving works that earn the art title. It is his controls, in other words, which create the art. This is what the Ladue children have learned. They also can control their simple materials into a pleasure-giving picture that wins the title, Art. They don't give a rap about the title. Their jumping excitement is born of *doing*. Their doings are not yet masterpieces; far from it; they are happy experiments and should be looked at tolerantly. The point is they are on their way. They are learning that *art is something which can be used in everyday life*.

Ralph M. Pearson is a well-known art critic and founder of Design Workshop, Nyack, New York. Author of *The New Art Education* (revised 1952) and *The Modern Renaissance in American Art* (1954), published by Harper and Brothers.

Color-crayon drawing by Susan, sixth grade, of Ladue School.







*Karen, age six, made this imaginative painting. Parents (and teachers) should recognize and nourish free self-expression.*

## A NOTE TO PARENTS ON CHILD ART

*How would you answer the questions of a parent on the art of his child? The author shares with us her answers to many such questions. Suggestions given are also appropriate for classroom teachers.*

JOSEFA KAMINSKI

For the last ten years my husband and I have conducted Saturday morning art classes for children. Two questions always come from the parents. (1) Do you think my child has talent? (2) If so, what can I as his mother (or father) do to help him? In answer to these two questions I wish to write this note to parents. (Editor's Note: Classroom teachers often have the same questions and could profit by reading.)

**Your Attitude about Talent** Remember that drawing, first of all, is natural to children, more so than writing. We take writing for granted because we, as adults, have learned to write, and we expect our children to learn to write. However, where drawing and painting are concerned, the attitude of the parent suddenly changes. For example: "My Bobbie is very gifted, but he must have inherited his talent from his grandmother, she was artistic. I couldn't draw a straight line if I had to!" Almost anyone can learn to draw if really interested enough to practice. Of course, in art as in writing, what is eventually *said* in pictures or words depends upon the individual and what he as a person has to express. Let us examine exactly what we mean by "talent." When used regarding children it is more aptly referred to as an aptitude and interest which if encouraged can develop into a talent, and if neglected, whether through ignorance or carelessness can quickly be destroyed. Talent is developed by exercise.

**How Parents Can Help** Many have a great influence upon children and their art, but the deciding factor still lies largely with the parents. Willingness to expend added thought, effort and enthusiasm will be rewarded tenfold by the child's pleasure, feelings of satisfaction and achievement. The wonderful fact about children's work is that they are not concerned with the how and why. They pour their thoughts and feelings onto paper without the barriers of self-consciousness, techniques and preconceived notions about art. This ability of free self-expression, of the innate urge to create, to enjoy and play with color, to try new ideas, are the qualities that we, as parents, should recognize and preserve in the child; nourish with encouragement, stimulate with enthusiasm and protect from confused adult thinking regarding art. How can this be done? We offer the following suggestions that have been used with very satisfactory results by the many parents that have called on us.

1. It is most important to treat your child's work with respect. Never crush, crumble or destroy his efforts. (If you must clear out old work, do it when he is not home.) Have an important spot in the house where his pictures are on display; not hidden back in his room, but in the living room or dining room where outsiders can also see them. You will be amazed at the adults' reactions to the spontaneous, fresh charm of children's work. From this interest shown in his efforts, your child will gain a new sense of importance, assurance and accomplishment.

2. Do not poke fun at the quaintly distorted images he has drawn. A blunt "What's that!" can shatter a child's belief in what he has created. More tactfully, ask him to "tell" you about his pictures. He may have a different version for every member of the family he shows it to, but so much the better, for he is thereby exercising an already lively imagination. He is proud of what he has made, wants it to be appreciated, but is not ready for adult criticism.

3. Provide a comfortable working area with good lighting for your child. With plenty of newspapers, a plastic table cover, and a plastic apron, you are ready to let him splash. Have a place prepared in which you keep his paints, pictures and papers when finished. A little time spent in advance to organize a place for materials will save much worry and effort in the preparation and cleaning up. When your child asks to paint it is so easy to say "no," but if prepared you will be much more apt to say "yes."

4. Have you ever watched a child try to paint with wobbly brushes, scrubbing at hard little pans of paint, and getting nothing but thin, pale colors on paper that shrivels when wet? Such materials would frustrate and dampen any child's desire to paint. So, by all means, buy a set of brilliant poster colors, they are also opaque and he can paint one color over another. Buy some stiff, firm brushes, and gather all the pieces of cardboard you can find. Serve the colors in a pan from the jars, then close and put the jars of paint away so that they will not dry out, and so that the colors will not become mixed in the jars. (If they become dry, add water.) Army surplus mess trays make excellent



ANOTHER PAINTING BY KAREN, AGE SIX

palettes, for the compartments keep the colors separated while the child is working. You will also need a jar of water that will not tip, plenty of paint cloths and your child is then ready for real fun. Good tools encourage good work!

5. Now comes the time where good judgment is needed; where to help with suggestions, and where to leave well enough alone. Children work quickly, freely, and often do not complete their work. Their interest span is short; they might start painting their chair or teddy bear if you do not watch them. You might even wonder if it was worth getting the paints out, yet with patience, in time, you will marvel at the growth that is occurring. There will be a time when questions will come up about how to draw a certain thing. If possible, show him the object in question. Together *observe* and *analyze* how it is constructed, but remember to *allow* him to put his own interpretation on it.

A common mistake is to have a child copy from, or trace a picture. This is a sure way to dull any creative spark he may have. Often the question of what to paint arises. Here again you must be diplomatic in not *telling* him what to do, instead, let the child express his own thoughts. For example: a word like "happiness," "rain," "party," "jungle," etc. is colorful enough for him to take it from there and create an idea of his own. All this may seem to be a great deal of effort to a busy mother, or a tired father. Is it really so important to a child? Yes it is! Not that he necessarily grows up to become an artist, but, if he learns at an early age to express himself graphically, he will be exercising one of our greatest gifts, imagination. By developing an imagination that is *alive* and *active*, your child will find later in life that it will be beneficial in his contributing much to whatever profession he chooses to enter.

Josefa Kaminski teaches at the University of California, Los Angeles campus, in the new Art Workshop for Children.

AL HURWITZ

*Adolescents are all shook up over Elvis Presley. If you can't beat 'em, why not join 'em, decided this art teacher. He did, and his students rocked and rolled their way to creative art expression.*

# ELVIS PRESLEY AND ART

The discussion was a heated one. Two attractive ninth grade girls were deep in debate, and as this is a comparatively rare occasion among my students, my curiosity let me drift over in their direction. I had just finished a brief talk on changing spacial concepts in painting in preparation for a few lessons in perspective, and was wondering somewhat wistfully, if the discussion had anything to do with the effect of Ucello's flat linear renditions as opposed to, say, the grandioseness of

Veronese in his use of architecture. No such luck. "Mr. Hurwitz," demanded Betty B, "do grownups hate Elvis Presley as much as we hear they do?" I considered my reply carefully before answering. "They certainly seem to," was the gem I came up with. "Do *you* hate him?" This time my reply was swift, spontaneous and unrehearsed. "Not at all," I said. They exchanged a look of triumph, and that should have terminated the exchange, but I just had to qualify my

*"Heart Break Hotel" by Carolyn Manry, tenth grade, Southwest Miami High School. Drawing inspired by Presley recording.*



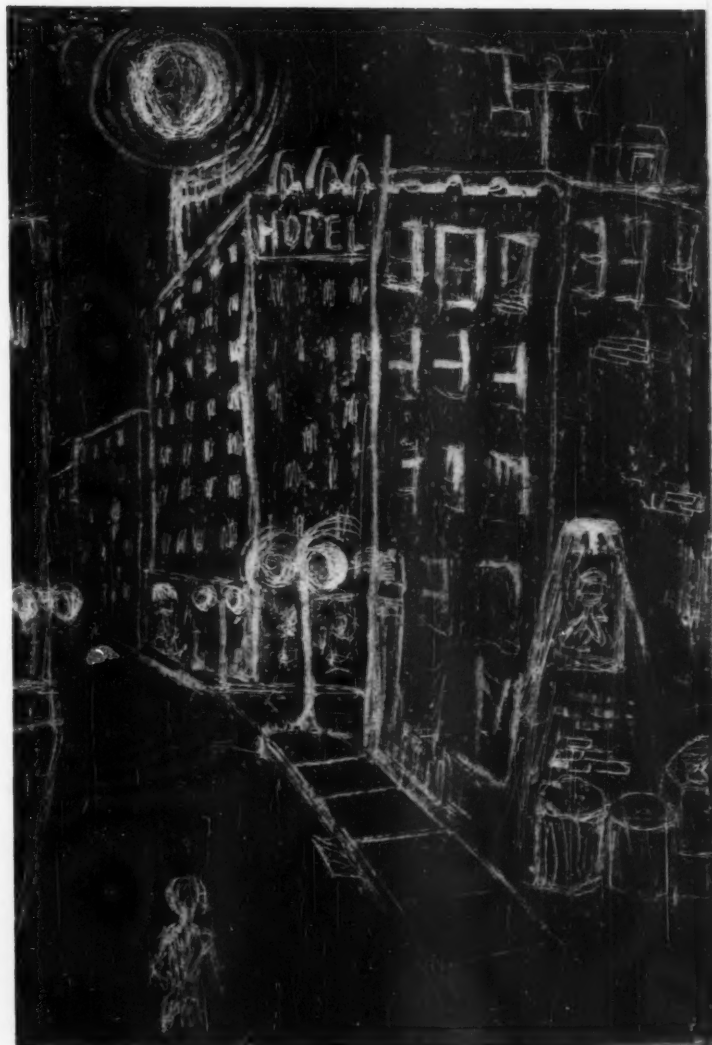


endorsement. That was when the affair herein to be referred to in my plan book as "The Presley Experiment" began.

"I enjoy watching Elvis Presley," I said, "but not for his music." "Come again?" asked Sally X. "Well, I look at him the way I do something in a zoo. The way people in Scotland must have flocked to see the Loch Lomond monster." I could feel Sally stiffening with resentment. Suddenly she blurted out—"Well, I think that James Dean and Elvis Presley have more talent than any living entertainer." Betty came to her defense with, "I followed Elvis Presley to Orlando once, and I'll do it again." "Well now," I said, "I agree with you about Dean; I think he had the makings of a fine actor, but I can't see the slightest thing he has in common with Elvis Presley." "I guess I'd better not open my mouth in the class," huffed Betty. And I could see that not only was the discussion closed and the teacher routed, but that my stock had fallen considerably with two of the most talented and interested pupils.

I slumped back to my desk, licking my wounds—and intent on doing some serious thinking about the Presley phenomenon. Here was a boy who had vamped an intelligent well-bred girl from Miami to Orlando, where a vaudeville act boasting the combined talents of Albert Schweitzer, Norbert Weiner and Serge Koussevitsky would have left her at home with her eyeballs glued to the TV screen. I had witnessed Presley myself on several occasions and was not impressed with his wares, although I do not call myself an egg-head or a snob, numbering among my favorite singers such performers as Louis Armstrong, Harry Belafonte, John Jacob Niles, Bessie Smith and the late great "Fats" Waller. And I have among my records, songs by Marlene Dietrich, Burl Ives, Al Jolson and a host of other troubadors who have lightened my household chores for years. I suppose what struck me most positively about Presley was *his overt* vulgarity. But on second thought, isn't the very idea of being aware of vulgarity a kind of sophistication—hence an adult responsiveness? It then follows that as a teacher, I am being unfair in imposing my adult standards upon Junior High School students, and should try to approach the Presley thing from my students' point of view.

Now, *this*, was going to be difficult. I toyed with the idea of opening my soul to them, for their conversion of me, so to speak. But I knew deep within me I could never be brain washed into thinking of Rock'n Roll as an art form. On the other hand, all the textbooks tell us that the secondary art curriculum ought—in a large degree, be based on the interests of the pupils. If Presley is what they are interested in, who am I to say this cannot be turned to some unforeseen advantage? For a while, I wondered if a social studies or basic education teacher might not be interested in my theory. I could see eager committees working independently with a hard gemlike flame that would have inspired Milton himself. The attire of Elvis Presley might be one topic for study, with a mural depicting the various phases of the garment industry. I could see combined the finest minds in styling, merchandising and consumer research, all planning together to strike



BY JON MINGUS

*Interpretations of "Heart Break Hotel," an Elvis Presley recording; made by ninth and tenth grade students of author at Southwest Miami High School, Florida. Mediums varied.*



BY BRUCE DRINKUTH, GRADE 10



the exact note of motorcycle elegance. Another topic might be the somewhat rococo hair-do of Presley, with a follow-up report on the history of hair styling through the ages seen as a link between the inner directed and outer directed man.

No, I sighed, this must of necessity be a lonesome journey—a private matter between the art teacher and one guinea pig class. I had made my decision. I would attempt to use Elvis Presley in the interest of science, so to speak, and that afternoon, when I purchased my copy of "Heart Break Hotel," felt not unlike Dr. Jekyll quaffing the dread potion that brought on Mr. Hyde. That night I listened to the record. As I gave myself up to its lugubrious strains, I attempted to push from my mind the image of the vocalist. Much as I tried, the image persisted. The soft petulance of Presley's face—(likened unto a Greek God by a writer in a popular magazine), the pathetic "sharpness" of his pipe-stem black trousers plus the general tone of quivering emotionalism all kept intruding themselves into my consciousness. When I played the record for my class the following afternoon, there were, needless to say, no such misgivings on the part of my audience.

My students were intrigued — and a little nonplused, by the sudden dumping of their idol into their laps, but soon caught on to the novelty of using his music as a jumping off place for some uninhibited picture-making. Simple, reportorial picture-making comes much harder to teen-agers than it does to a nine-year-old because, I suppose, the desire to conform and be accepted by the group in a ninth grade class seems to be at odds with his inability to render the world about him in a realistic manner. If Elvis Presley could provide me with a means of breaking through this misconcep-



BY SID CREASEY



BY DIXIE DIXON, GRADE 9-2





BY JOYCE ESTEP, GRADE 9

*The author reasoned that if art should be based on interest of adolescent students, why not try the "Presley Experiment". Believe it or not, students worked more quietly than ever.*



BY DANNY SAROLIN, GRADE 9

tion, I'd wear blue suede shoes for the rest of my teaching career. In any case, it was immediately clear there was going to be very little trouble in maintaining a sustained span of interest for the brief hour before us.

The first time through the record, we tried to get the dominant mood of the piece and to think of it not only in terms of color, but of the media best suited to carry out the mood. All agreed that loneliness was the "leitmotif" of the ballad and that this quality alone was worthy of both song and of picture-making. (After all, thought I, did not "The Sorrows of Young Werther" and the "Glass Menagerie" touch on this universal theme?) Of course I wasn't about to break the spell with even a passing mention of Goethe or Tennessee Williams. The second time through, I asked them

to seek out word images, the better to crystallize the established mood. This was not difficult to do, considering the impact of such lyrics as: "Although it's always crowded—You still can find some room—For broken-hearted lovers—To cry there in the gloom."

By the end of the second rendition, fingers were itching to get started, so supplies were given out with complete freedom of choice allowed in their selection. Colored chalk drew the biggest support with crayon, water color and India ink in just that order. Now we had approximately forty minutes of "Heart Break Hotel" ahead of us and I was anxious to see the fruit that the Hotel was going to bear. To begin with, there was very little sitting around waiting for ideas to evidence themselves. Those who had in mind crayon etching or resist began to work furiously. Arthur G. was explaining to his neighbor that he was going to do a monochromatic picture in shades of blue, because "Hotel" was a blues number—hence blue was the logical color. Another wanted to use warm colors, but felt they would violate the feeling of the piece. She compromised on a violent sunset setting off a Charles Adamesque hotel. One girl had a lone female figure sitting on a Victorian type bench in a deserted garden overgrown with weeds and tropical foliage. The boy who chose India ink used a long perspective vista to get a quality of loneliness that might have been straight out of Chirico.

There was probably less conversation during the ensuing half-hour than at any previous lesson I had prepared. In trying to explain their rapt attention, I wondered if perhaps they didn't feel that this was a private challenge, and their way of exonerating themselves for an interest that lacked adult approval. I don't know for sure, but I do know their preoccupation and wealth of original ideas made me completely forget the shabby image of the previous evening. It came to me suddenly that they were creating very much the way they did when they were in the first grade—freshly, directly and unashamedly.

Time was just about up. The guitar was moaning out the chorus, and one boy found his pastel casting blue spirals of smoke from a deserted shack while my etcher was scraping out pools of murky yellow-green light on his moonlit street. One boy who would have scoffed at the idea of abstract painting found his water colors were saying all he felt without the slightest delineation of a hotel, a person or a guitar. Cleanup time. The only way I could get them to quit was to turn off the music, return the record player and announce that the next time the record would be of my own choice. We were all happy with the hour's work and were sobered by the thought that while it worked this time, a steady diet of it would never do. Incidentally, have you heard Presley's "No Good Hound Dog?" Man, it's neat. Be sure to get it.

Al Hurwitz teaches art in the Southwest Miami Senior High School, Miami, Florida, and is active in stage, radio, and television. He has just completed his third teaching year.

VINCENT J. POPOLIZIO

*Creative ability is the common property of all and high school students have basic needs which only art can fill. New York's supervisor of art gives his arguments for an expanded art education program.*

# Art for all / in the high school

A basic urge of man is his desire to communicate with others—to express his feelings about his individual interests, his fears and frustrations, his hopes for the future—to play his unique role in the culture of the world about him. Throughout the ages man has communicated by means of a visual language—art. This language is always changing. It re-

flects the age in which it is written, yet it leaves imprinted in the sands of time a series of signs which help future generations to gain an insight into the triumphs of the past. Only recently have we fully realized that creative ability in the arts is not restricted to the few, but is the common property of all. It is only when *all* the people have an opportunity

*The student at left, who is giving a one-man show, is explaining work to other Nyack Junior-Senior High School students.*



PHOTO BY L. F. STOCKMEYER FOR NYACK, NEW YORK PUBLIC SCHOOLS





COURTESY NYACK, NEW YORK PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND CARL REED

*Student demonstrates weaving place mats on a harness loom.*

to express visual impressions in an organized fashion that true communication can be achieved.

**Principles** How does the school go about helping the adolescent develop his ability to communicate in this visual language of art? There are, of course, certain principles on which the program may be based. Let us examine them.

**A. The basic subject matter of art revolves around the relationships of the individual to his environment.** We must, then, strive to help the individual look at life through art: make him visually conscious of the world about him; keep him in touch with nature; introduce him to a variety of quality products; acquaint him with the world of art in all its aspects; instill curiosity. Each individual should be made aware of the artistic resources in his own community—the museums, fine buildings, objects of art, natural beauty spots, current trends in architectural designs and community planning. All experiences should be thought of in terms of their use today, with the ultimate aim of raising community standards.

**B. Our job is to help individuals to know themselves better.** We must recognize existing artistic qualities in each individual—harness his emotions and intellect—foster the development of the skills required to achieve such production standards as will satisfy him.

**C. The Art teacher provides an atmosphere—a place where dreams can come to life.** This involves utilization of the techniques, the skills, the tools, the materials which will

stimulate the individual to express his impressions honestly and organize them so that they will communicate his feelings to others.

**D. The major function of art education is to build understanding about art.** Participants in the program need to be introduced to art fundamentals and understand them. They must acquire an organized concept of design. They must understand the language of art in all its aspects. They must learn how to be calmly critical.

**Some Standards for Quality in the Program** Based on initial work in a wide range of art media, teachers must expand their activities to include the use of a variety of creative ideas and the materials related to them. Pupils must be encouraged to work to their optimum level of achievement. Pupils must acquire the ability to organize. Appropriate and well-timed techniques must be utilized. Pupils must never lose sight of major objectives. Appreciation of quality of materials and their uses must be acquired. Teachers must identify quality in their pupils and provide a range of experiences to meet needs at different levels.

**Road Blocks** Teachers should be conscious of certain danger signals which may from time to time appear along the road to the development of full potential in creative expression. These include: permitting one formula, method of motivation, or teaching technique to become absolute; limiting the individual to one type of program or area; failure to provide a continuous flow of appropriate experiences; expecting pupils to know how to solve their own problems; neglect of related art fundamentals; stressing facts instead of principles; insufficient stress on art vocabulary and related history; too little use of community resources and outside experience; lack of opportunity for self-evaluation; failure to identify and provide for unusual talent.

**Suggested Classroom Approaches** The first step in working with any group of pupils is to motivate them to want to think about and do things. Starting on the level at which teachers find them, pupils should be introduced to a suitable variety of materials. They will then explore the quality and ways of working with different materials and art forms. In the process new experiences will be involved and opportunities for exploring the use of related materials will be found. A basic teaching plan should be organized for each group. We might begin with common experiences involving fundamental principles. We might then tap other personal or group experiences. Pupils should be given considerable choice in choosing materials and freedom for exploration. Well-timed demonstrations and continual guidance are fundamental. Individual and group work experience should be varied and individual objectives kept in full view at all times.

The art classroom must be well planned. Several activities may be going on simultaneously, some involving in-



dividual work and others calling for group effort. The classroom should provide facilities for: (1) graphic arts, which includes block printing, serigraphy, etching, lithography and photography; (2) three-dimensional design including: ceramics, metalcrafts, weaving, modeling, sculpturing and work with other materials; (3) creative mechanical drawing; (4) appreciation and use of art in daily life. A variety of equipment and supplies and adequate storage facilities should be provided. Work centers and their equipment should be carefully planned with appropriate traffic lanes between them. Special provision should be made for mobility and flexibility in the use of equipment in and out of the room and for making a variety of materials available quickly and systematically. The average all-purpose art

room should be designed to accommodate approximately 25 pupils at the secondary school level. Such a room should contain a minimum of 1,000 square feet.

To have true educative value, art must instill in the pupil, as an active force in his life, an honest understanding of creative thought combined with the ability necessary to express himself aesthetically. Any art education program which has attained this objective has played a worthwhile role in the pageant of life today.

Vincent J. Papolizio is supervisor of art education for New York, with offices in Albany, New York. Illustrations are by courtesy of Carl Reed, until recently associate art supervisor for New York, now at New Paltz teachers college.

*A high school freshman class tries figure sketching from a student model, at Nyack, New York. Carl Reed was the teacher.*



PHOTO BY L. F. STOCKMEYER, COURTESY NYACK, NEW YORK PUBLIC SCHOOLS



*Workshop participants shown include eight principals, three assistant principals, assistant superintendent, two coordinators.*

*We have heard of many art workshops for classroom teachers, but when the administrative staff of a city's schools attends a special workshop, that is news! Here's what they did in Erie, Pennsylvania.*

GEORGE C. DEIMEL

## Art workshop for school administrators

During the past five years, the art department of the Erie, Pennsylvania schools has conducted some seventy-seven art workshop programs, mainly for classroom teachers or parents. The most recent of these voluntary art workshops was held for the administrators and supervisors of the city schools. Guest authority was Robert Cronhauer from the art staff of Indiana, Pennsylvania State Teachers College. He pointed up some of the present-day concepts, purposes, and functions of art education; demonstrated a wide range of media and applications in creative teaching. Superintendents, principals, and supervisors attending had an opportunity to

try their own hands at various activities. Art education needs the understanding, support, and appreciative-permissive attitude of school officials, since teachers operate within the framework established by the administration. Attitudes of administrators are conditioned by their knowledge of current trends and ideas, and by their feeling of ease with an art medium. This workshop served that purpose in Erie.

George C. Deimel is coordinator of art, Erie, Pennsylvania. Dr. John M. Hickey, school superintendent, has supported the various art workshops and participated in the one described.

THEA BANK JENSEN

# Values in a cooperative project

**Editor's Note:** This article, written by one of our Danish readers, suggests a worthwhile group project suitable for the grades and teacher-training classes; but we especially want you to read her superb description of the teacher's role in a democratic class situation. Don't overlook it!

Here you see a house—it was made by a class of leisure-school students from Kursus for Smabornspædagoger (kindergarten and leisure-school teachers college) in Denmark. The theme was: scrap material used in a cooperative work. The result was the house seen in the pictures. It was a sociologic study with the purpose to show the ways of living and settling down of different classes of people. In former days the house represented was a patrician one. Some of the good people from the old days are still there (like the two old ladies on the first floor and the doorkeeper's family in the basement). The other apartments are taken by just ordinary people. Above the doorkeeper's lodge we have a second-class dance restaurant, and next to the two old ladies there lives a wholesale dealer in bacon. And then there is a postman's family with a couple of children, and a teacher's family with a whole nestful of youngsters. A boarding-house has opened up on the third floor, and on that floor we also have a couple of bachelors living on casual jobs. They have let a room to a dressmaker. In the very top of the house, in the attic, the free birds, the photographer and the artist, are housing.

In what way, now, was this cooperative work carried out? After the class had decided on the subject, the measurements of the house and separate apartments had to be fixed. The height of the house was 125 centimeters, its breadth 100 centimeters and the depth of it was fixed to 55 centimeters. Each apartment had a floor area of 2200 square centimeters. In all apartments the kitchen had to face the back yard. In all other cases you could deal absolutely freely with the area of the apartment. Walls could be put up or taken down in accordance with necessity. After all these preparations the class had to decide as to inhabitants and floors. The different tasks were dealt out and the students made up groups of three and four, each group taking upon itself a single apartment with inhabitants. The students worked with a keen eagerness. While three of them constructed the

*A Danish college teacher discusses an art activity in a teacher-training class and gives us excellent ideas on the role of the teacher in a democratic social group. Here is sound democracy from Denmark.*

skeleton of the house, others started in on people and furnishings. These lessons were highly animated by the social cooperation, the pleasure in mutual help, and the mutual inspiration. Particularly this social working together of the different students was a fertile issue of the common subject.

During several weeks beforehand, the students had collected odds and ends, so when work began, we emptied

*An apartment house with some of the present tenants, seen from the side facing the back yard, made as a group project.*

PHOTO BY LIS LUND HANSEN, COPYRIGHT







PHOTO COPYRIGHT, LIS LUND HANSEN

*Here you have a view of the old ladies' fine apartment, with the parrot and family portraits on the wall. The doorkeeper's wife has another taste in interior decoration, below. This project was made by a college class preparing to be teachers.*

out in the middle of the tables the contents of respective bags and boxes so everybody could select just the piece he wanted. The materials were boxes of different kinds, paper and cardboard scraps, corks, wire, pine and spruce cones, beech nuts and acorns, tinfoil, bits of wood and material, string and leather, feathers, etc. For helping material we used a little clay, paste, tape, needle and thread. The task had to be fulfilled in weekly double lessons, covering a hundred

minutes. In less than two months the house was ready. A student with deft hands—a former electrician—put up genuine electric fixtures, and the different groups took advantage of the light effects in the most different ways. There were in all three electric accommodations per apartment.

If you put the question—What good can it do to grown-ups to toy around for hours, wasting their time on such altogether worthless things?—There can be but *the* answer, that



in this mechanized age of ours, where you can buy anything without the least effort or personal initiative, it gives a deep joy to be able to create something out of nothing, and doing so in cooperation with a group of people you are tied to. As a toy to play with, the house has no value whatsoever, so the joy at the work has not been directed by the idea of its further use as a toy which cannot wear out. The value of it is a purely mental-hygienic one. For a pedagogue it is important to know children's ways of working, and to feel in himself part of the childish joy that comes from creativeness in itself. Such joy is most directly induced through the use of scrap material. The pleasure in the remodeling and the remaking of the objects is the essential point. A cooperative work of this kind has many aspects. As above mentioned it develops the cooperative spirit. The students have an inspiring influence on each other. They discuss the different practical problems, and one is forced to take a living part in the surroundings that one has taken upon oneself to describe. Thus observation is sharpened. An atmosphere is created in the classroom, and each student is an active member of the community. Any adoration of championship is annihilated through this way of working. Everybody can find a working field that responds to his abilities.

A most democratic way of teaching! I would like to try to define the teacher's part in such a work. First of all the teacher should be able to awaken the interest of the students for the cooperative theme. We must not forget that many of the students are rather frustrated in using their imagination in a free way. Often education is responsible for that. Perfectionism puts up its head everywhere, and fear of being laughed at or not being able to make a thing as perfectly as a specially gifted student can easily put an end to any creative effort. Thus the aim of the teacher must be to loosen perfectionistic ties and liberate the creative powers of the students. An atmosphere of well-being and good company is created through all the laughter and fun that accompanies this kind of work—through the spontaneous singing of the students when they are happiest and most occupied with their work, and when they talk comfortably together about things.

There are no unwholesome ambitions—no hard competition but a human atmosphere. The teacher helps to create this feeling of helpfulness, safety and pleasure. He must be able to lend a helping hand and to encourage the shy ones and kindly but—and best—with a little sense of humour—be able to hold back a bit the overactive people who can easily, though unintentionally, squeeze down the weaker ones. The job of the teacher will be then to make balance in the group and to be at hand when needed. He should be, so to say, a kind of midwife for the creativeness of the students, but the activity should be with them, and *not* with the teacher. *His* inspiration and enthusiasm should intoxicate the students. He should be able to help them use their own forces if needed, and thus contribute to the solution of the given theme in accordance to the students' own abilities and in their own way. If students have an opportunity to work

under such circumstances they have a better chance to understand the spontaneous working method and pleasure in the work itself that children have. In an easier way and perhaps with better results for everybody included, they would be able to take the lead in this and many other occupations for children, young people and grownups. Within oneself one should have felt a deep joy and content with a working method in order to be able to give it over with pleasure. If a teacher can do this, everything will thrive around him, and this is a wonderful thing.

**Thea Bank Jensen** teaches students preparing to be teachers of kindergarten and leisure schools in Denmark. She tells us that she has read *School Arts* with pleasure for years.



*Two views of the restaurant on first floor. Above, you see the cook tasting his food and the bottles the barkeeper has on hand. Stools are made from corks and lids of bottles, suggesting some firsthand research. In the view below the first couple has arrived. The pianist does his best to warm up, and the barkeeper is smiling his most charming smile.*

BOTH PHOTOS COPYRIGHT, LIS LUND HANSEN



*Eight years ago, when crowded conditions required that her children be limited to a four-hour school day, this parent started art activities for her own children and others. Here are ideas she developed.*

FRIEDA SUMMER

## CLAY GAMES AND LOOSENING IDEAS

Some of us, working with children with clay, look at pictures of clay pieces in School Arts magazine and wonder what inspired them. The children we may be working with use the word "can't" too frequently. Here are some ideas that are helpful and even exciting. (1) Round Robin Clay—played by groups of three or four. One starts, the others guess at what is coming. As soon as the second has an idea of how to continue, and the first is ready to relinquish the clay, it moves to the second; and so on. (2) Humorous Figures—start with a heavy base, square or round. Then add a piece of clay for above the waist, a piece of clay for the head, sticks or coils for the arms. The humor comes in the twist of the head and the position of the arms, which can be very flexible because it is all sitting on a firm base. (3) For the frustrated child or children who won't start anything—teacher starts making something. It need only be a nicely

*A humorous figure is being modeled on a heavy base of clay.*



*The toothpicks, whiskers, and feather were removed for the firing. The boys used this as a decoration for their club-room, and followed it up with a family of hammerheads. A fleet of clay boats was later made, using original glazes.*

squared base or a smooth ball. (The editor thinks it had better not be any more than this.) As the child watches her work, she can say, "Does it remind you of anything?" At some point it invariably does. Then another child will say, "Start something for me." It won't need more than two or three starts to loosen a group. (4) The word "Imaginary"—imaginary bird, imaginary animal, or fish. If it is a bird, it just needs wings; if it is an animal, any kind of legs or a tail will do. This brings out the one part of the animal that they remember and it frees them of the fear of an exact likeness. (5) A supply of colorful feathers purchased at a millinery store, colored toothpicks, or wool, will help. (6) Throw four or five pieces of clay until they assume various shapes. Then put them together in a form that is either pleasing to the eye or suggests something. Add texture in the way of thorns, or leaves if it is a tree; or features or feather lines, if it is an animal or a bird.

Frieda Summer, a parent, started art work with her children and others when Long Island schools were on half-day shifts.

GEORGE PAPPAS

*Clay work has many values for the primary child not present in other mediums. Children should not be robbed of this experience because of problems it presents to the teacher. Author helps solve them.*

# CLAY IN THE PRIMARY GRADES

The desire to work with a plastic medium such as clay is as strong in most children as the need to draw and paint. What a wonderful experience it is for a child to fearlessly push, pull, or squeeze a soft lump of clay into a personally satisfying result. If the art growth of the child has been guided in a free and significant direction, he works happily and with complete confidence. The child finds security in this easily changed medium. He develops through the regular use of clay a completely different kind of creative thinking process, in which he achieves and becomes sensitive to the actual concept of a three-dimensional form. In a psychological sense clay becomes for many children a more direct outlet for emotions than drawing and painting because of the tactile association with the material. A simple experience with clay may be one of the most satisfying methods of self-expression that a child can find. Working with a material of this nature, therefore, becomes a definite and necessary part of any primary art program.

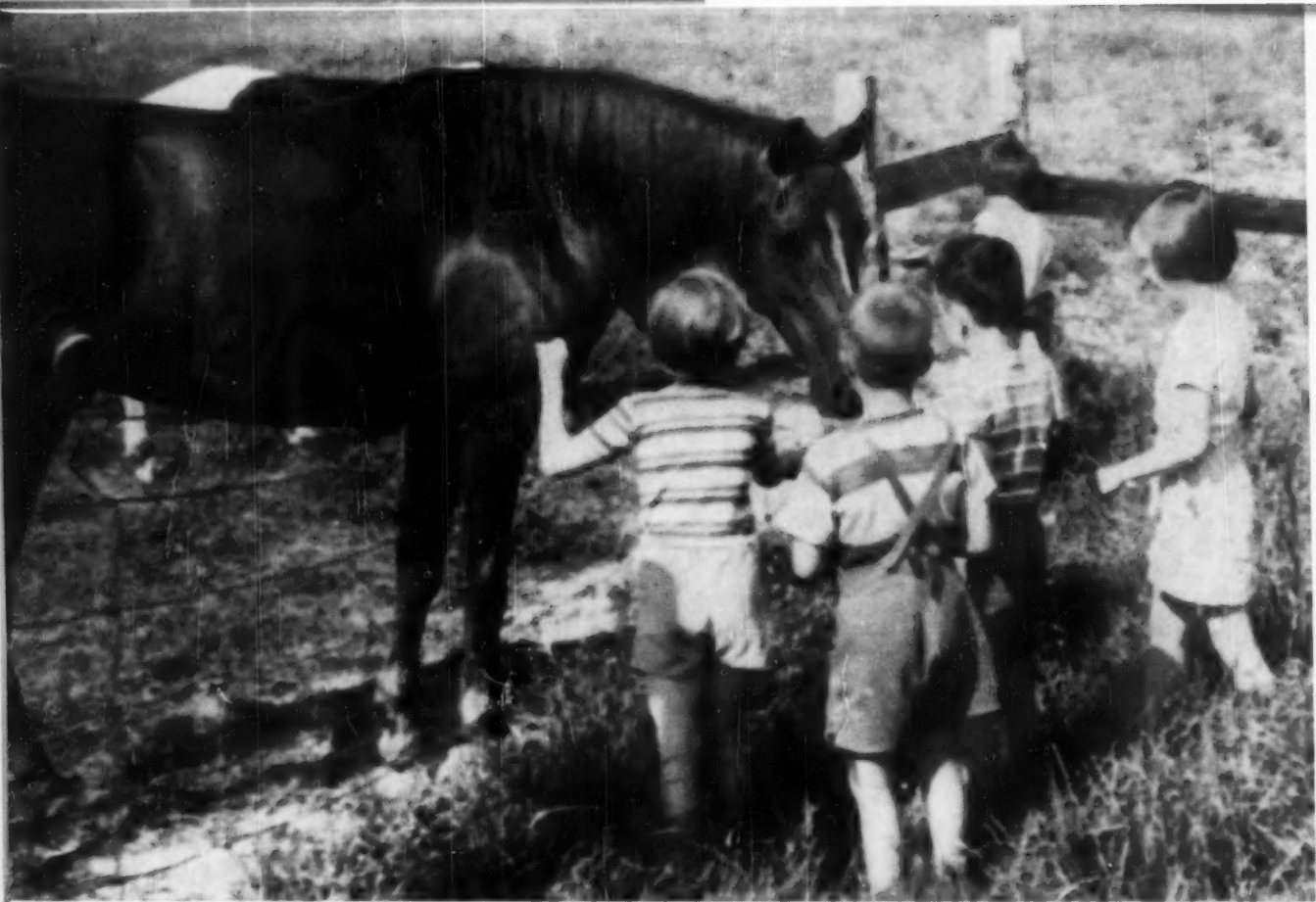
Experience with clay in the primary grades is often considered a once-a-year treat for the children or a special and difficult skill requiring a background of technical knowledge and equipment. Because of this misconception clay work in many instances has become completely subordinate to drawing and painting. Working with clay in a well organized manner can be simple and enjoyable for the teacher and the child. We must always be aware of the fact that all children will not express themselves completely in the same media. If a child is constantly encouraged to use a material that cannot adequately express his ideas, the art experience may become a source of frustration or fear. There should be a limited balance and variety of two- and three-dimensional media if significant growth is to be developed.

In working with clay in the primary grades the questions that arise most frequently concern methods and materials. What should I teach the child to make first? Should the work be glazed? Is firing necessary? What tools and materials are essential? Actually, there is no one definite method or technique involved in working with clay or any other art material for that matter. The principles of free expression through experience, experimentation, and guidance are basic to creative art work in any media. Often the first experience with the very nature of the material will stim-



*A simple experience with clay may be a most satisfying one.*





*Animals are a favorite subject for clay modeling in primary grades. Firsthand observation may stimulate such activities.*

ulate the child. He feels the material, examines it, and then according to his personal temperament begins to work. There is usually no hesitation, fear, or lack of confidence on the part of the child since clay is physically and psychologically elemental to him.

In the first experiences with clay the teacher should only offer the children freedom and encouragement. The first products are usually strips, eggs, balls, or snakes. They are important as motor constructive experiences and as an introduction to form consciousness. As the child's growth and experience with clay develop, a need arises for motivation and guidance. Motivation is accomplished best through observation and experience. A trip to the farm or zoo with emphasis on observing the shapes and parts of animals will enrich his awareness of form. Tactile experiences with rocks, shells, small animals, birds, and other objects are much more effective since they allow the child to personally examine the objects. He should be encouraged to develop a sensitive awareness toward these various forms by holding them, feeling their parts, shapes and textures.

Guidance in clay work is concerned with encouragements and suggestion without interference. The teacher encourages creative thinking and expression by suggesting a specific subject that has been part of the child's experience during the motivation. For example, after the motivation concern-

ing the farm visit the teacher suggests that the child portray a farm animal that was seen. To ask the child to model "anything" that he saw at the farm in many instances defeats the whole purpose of the art lesson. The child should be confronted with a specific problem. He thinks about it in his own way, and solves it. It is this thought process involved in meeting and solving a specific problem through creative expression that makes the art experience a valuable factor in the growth of the child. The teacher does not impose his own ideas, methods or solutions on him but merely guides him toward a problem that is vital and significant to his experience. If the child is constantly allowed to choose a subject at random, that is, if the motivation is always culminated with the opportunity to do "anything," he may resort to stereotypes or repetitions of problems that he has successfully solved in the past rather than meeting the challenge of the new experience.

In the primary grades subject matter usually deals with animals and people. Any forced methods or techniques that will produce bowls, dishes, ashtrays, or the like should be avoided until the child is ready to accept such objects as significant to his world. The use of tools should also be limited in the primary grades. The child should be encouraged to use his fingers as the essential tools for modeling. A teaspoon or a large rounded tongue depressor may be intro-



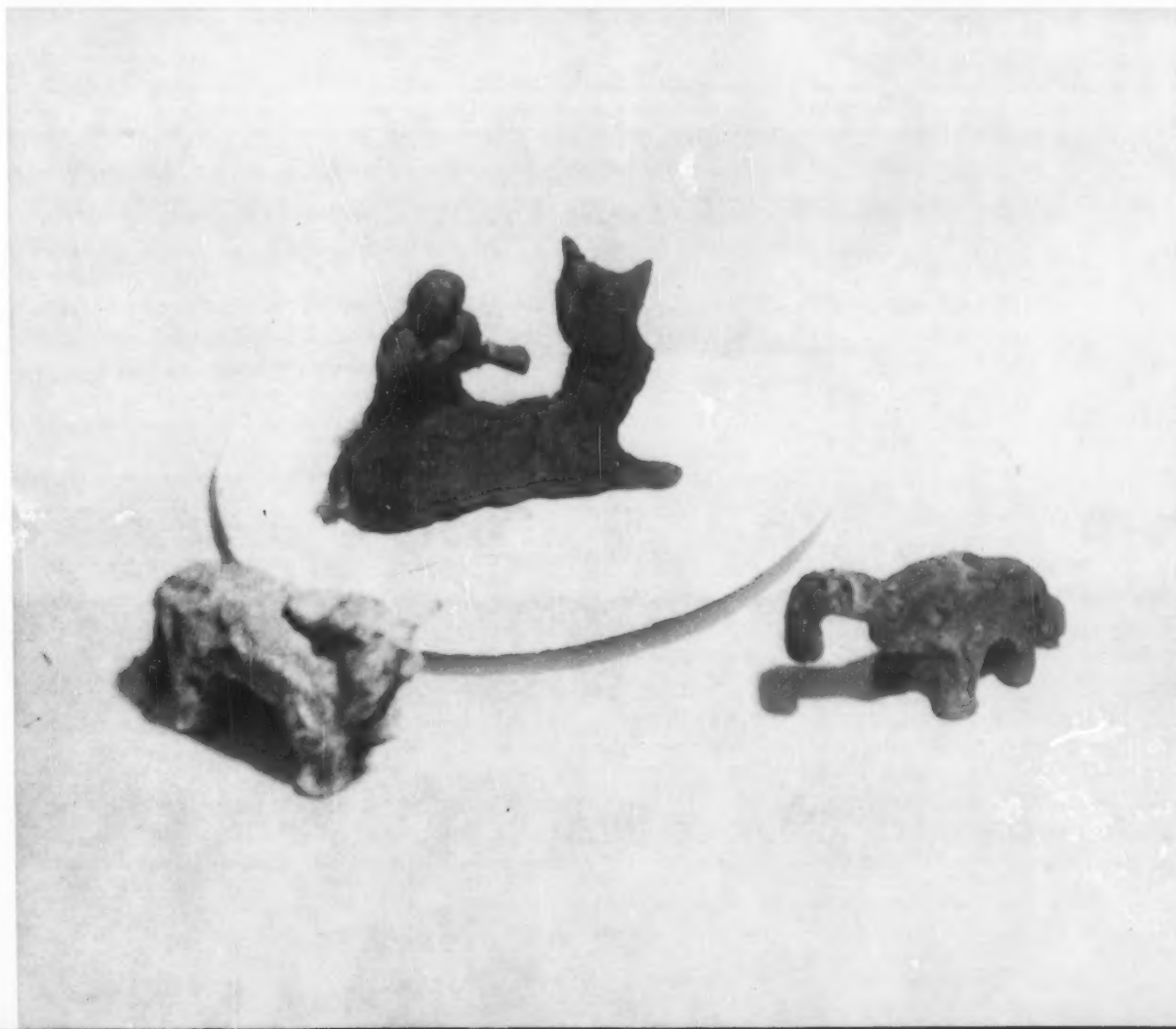
duced if the child cannot solve his problem without the aid of a mechanical device. Thick clay slip will help in some instances if he has repeated difficulty in joining pieces of clay. Sharp pointed modeling tools and pencils should not be encouraged since in many instances the child will resort to drawing on clay in a two-dimensional manner rather than solving the more difficult problem of modeling. In later years when the desire for decoration and detail has developed, these tools can be used successfully. The kindergarten and first grade levels will be totally absorbed with the "in-process" emotional satisfaction of the clay work and will show no immediate need for decoration or glazing after their work is completed. These techniques should not be taught as such to the child, but should be introduced only when the individual desires this knowledge as a result of his natural growth.

If firing and glazing are encouraged in these early years, the child may become "product conscious." That is, he will want to develop the final glazed product as quickly as possible and as a result may not be sincere and complete in his initial expression with the clay. Firing the child's clay work in the primary grades is also not recommended from a prac-

tical standpoint since his results will not be technically suited for the firing process. Imposing the restricted techniques of ceramic construction on the primary child will tend to discourage freedom of expression. The creative and thinking process involved in working with the clay is, of course, where the significant value of this art experience lies. It should not be lost under any circumstances through directed tricks or techniques. In later years when the complicated ceramic process can be understood and appreciated glazing and firing become a vital part of the clay experience.

In the late primary period the child may develop a desire for permanency of his work and some decoration. This new concern for the finished work at this early age is often a result of adult influences and suggestions "to make your clay look pretty" or "to bring something nice home to mother." These problems may be solved simply and satisfactorily, however, without the introduction of involved and distracting techniques. Clay cannot be made waterproof and durable without firing, but may be considerably strengthened through a variety of simple methods. If the clay is being mixed from the dry clay flour the addition of Karo Syrup in parts of two to one will help it harden upon

*Young children like to model animals and people. Dishes, bowls, and ashtrays have little significance to them at this time.*





*Every child should have the opportunity to work creatively in clay. Procedures can be simplified to make cleanup easier.*

drying. If the clay is in the moist state and ready to use another simple method is recommended. When the child is given a ball of clay (usually about the size of an orange), a full tablespoon of white school paste may be added and kneaded into it until the mixture is of the proper working consistency. The clay paste mixture can be kneaded by each child in a large paper plate. The paper plate will also help absorb the excess moisture that may develop when the two ingredients are first combined. Floors and desks will stay relatively clean if paper plates and newspapers are used. The addition of the paste also aids in joining pieces of clay without slip, thus eliminating the use of water entirely. Plasticine and other nonhardening plastic materials are not a substitute for natural clay since their individual properties vary in so many respects; they should be used as entirely different three-dimensional media.

If the need for decoration is sincere and important to the child then it should not be discouraged. When the clay work is dry it can be decorated quite successfully with thick tempera paint. In many respects the tempera paint reacts like colored clay engobes. The advantage of the tempera is that it will not rub off when dry. Decorating can greatly

enhance the work of the child if he is allowed to work freely and imaginatively without regard for what we think are "proper colors." The creative expression with the clay remains the important part of the plastic art experience and should not become subordinate to the decorative process.

The ideas that have been presented here relate directly to the primary grades. Working with the intermediate and older groups involves somewhat different problems and cannot be approached similarly. However, a factor that remains unchanged regardless of age level is the freedom from those directed tricks and techniques that tend to destroy creative thinking and expression. Tracing maple leaves, making hand prints or following any other directed method damages the child's growth since he is forced to arrive at a preconceived adult result. The principles of free expression through experience, experimentation and guidance remain the basis for creative work in clay.

George Pappas has taught ceramics at Iowa State Teachers College and art in Massachusetts schools. He is currently a graduate assistant at Penn State, working for a doctor's degree in art education. Has master's degree from Harvard.

# imaginary sea life

ARTHUR S. GREEN

After an excursion to a local aquarium, a sixth grade class created their own imaginary life beneath the sea, producing weird and fantastic scenes in crayon etchings, finger paintings, charcoal drawings, dioramas, murals, linoleum block prints, and three-dimensional collages. Try it sometime.

Arthur S. Green teaches elementary art in Chicago schools.



# crayon like enamel

JESSIE TODD

Jessie Todd taught at University of Chicago campus school.

Children work better when there is some challenge, and this is equally true when a common medium like crayons is being used. Instead of applying normal pressure on the wax crayons, we pressed very hard on some of our pictures, covering the entire paper with color. Then we rubbed it hard with paper toweling until it felt "as slippery as China dishes." The result was an unusual brilliant color, reminiscent of enamel or oil paint. Most of the children favored warmer colors like red, pink, and orange, although we used some cooler ones. We tried to make both plain and fancy spaces.







ANNA DUNSER

## first water colors

## fabulous fish forms

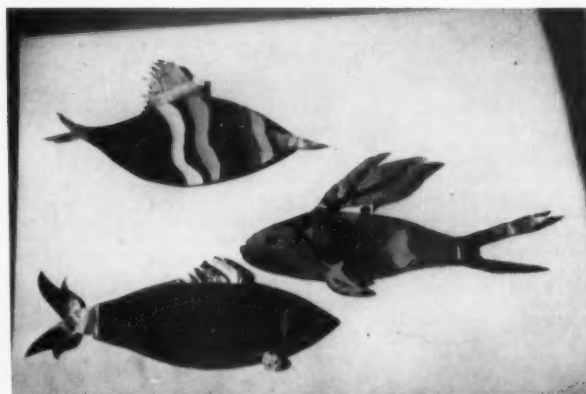
FRANK J. KRAFT

A desire to use up scrap materials led to a popular project for some of the junior high school boys in Fitzhugh Park School, Oswego, New York. We had scraps of copper foil left from metal tooling and a supply of small pieces of wood not large enough for the usual project. The boys drew around the wood to be used on a sheet of tracing paper and then designed a fish within the limits of the rectangle. Fins, tails, and the like were allowed to extend beyond the outline of the rectangle. Drawings were then transferred to the wood by reversing the tracing paper and rubbing with thumb-nail or pencil. Bodies were then sawed out on the jig saw and scraps of wood saved for additional decorations like eyes, and so on. Rough edges were smoothed with sandpaper. Wood forms were painted with a solid flat tempera color, with additional decorations added when the paint was dry. Tails, fins, and so on, were transferred to the copper foil by tracing with hard lead pencils to produce an impression. In some cases the copper was enhanced by tooling

When children have used crayons exclusively for some time the teacher may find that they do not like water colors because they run together. Mrs. Clark found this to be the case with the fourth grade. To give the children an appreciation of the flowing quality of water colors she gave the following lesson. Mrs. Clark and the children discussed color in skies. How many colors had they seen in skies at different times of the day and night? They decided that the colors of the earth, black and brown and green were found only in an angry ominous sky. All other colors appeared in pleasant skies. They considered too that the sky seemed darker high up, and faded to lighter colors near the ground.

The pupils were given water colors and drawing paper. They dipped the sheets of paper in water, then placed them flat on their desks. The paint was applied with a full brush. The colors flowed into each other and mingled to give some delightful effects. The paint was partly washed out of the brush for the lower part of the paper and heavy earth colors were painted in for the ground. This painting was done very quickly and the children could paint several sheets of paper in a short time. These were put aside to dry and in the next art lesson the children used only black to paint in trees, fences, houses, and even people against the colorful sky. The children had learned something about transparent water colors which bore fruit in many more pictures later.

Anna Dunser recently retired as a Missouri art supervisor.



ridges, lines, and textures. Cleaning with steel wool brought out the tooling. Both the body of the fish and copper pieces were given two coats of shellac. Copper pieces were then attached to the wood with small nails or tacks. Fish were exhibited (over an underwater background) by attaching a thumbtack to the back with adhesive tape.

Frank J. Kraft teaches art in the Oswego, New York schools.



Method of fastening fish.





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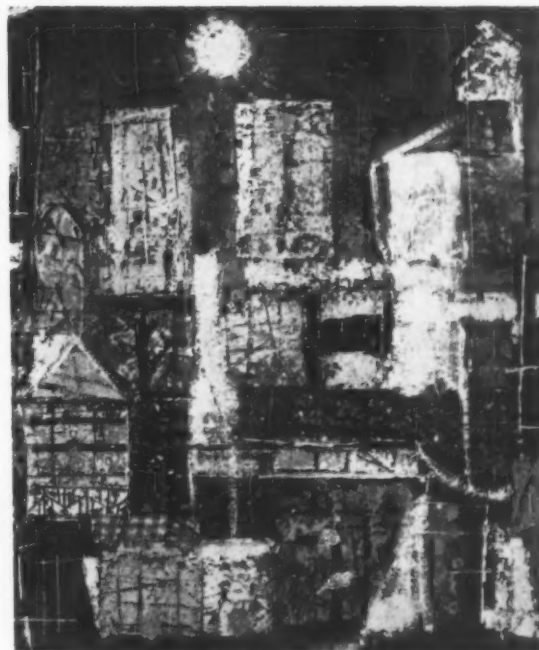
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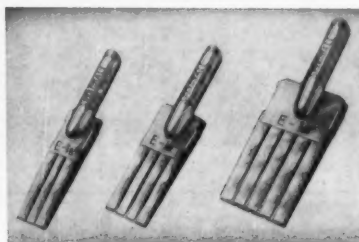
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**New Item** Pictured above is the Speedball Steel Brush, manufactured by C. Howard Hunt Pen Company of Camden, New Jersey. Some of you were introduced to this item while attending the N.A.E.A. Convention in Los Angeles this spring. It was announced and demonstrated at that time. Steel Brush is offered in response to a need for a tool that will provide the control of a pen and the flexibility and speed of a brush, and is designed for use in conjunction with the Speedball Pen line—also manufactured by Hunt. You'll find the Steel Brush especially useful for large lettering, posters and signs, as an auxiliary water-color brush, a palette knife for oils and for textural effects in several media. The three sizes fit any standard shank penholder. Available from all art and school supply dealers.

**Textile Colors** A folder on Nu Media textile colors is yours for the asking. Usable on all types of fabrics, these water-soluble colors wash off hands and equipment with soapy water. They are made permanent only with heat. The folder gives a variety of techniques for using this paint and shows examples of each: brush painting, stenciling, spatter painting, string painting, vegetable and block printing. In addition, it tells how to set the colors for permanence and suggests items to make for school and home. For your free copy, simply write Nu Media, P.O. Box 215, Faribault, Minnesota and ask for the Textile Colors folder.

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Attending the 1957 meeting of Binney & Smith Inc. Art Consultants in N. Y. are: (Seated) Victoria B. Betts, Jane R. Callaway, Sigrid Rasmussen, Elizabeth Bell, Hilda Roth. (Standing) Elizabeth Ohlrogge, Violet Eckhoff, Clio Heller, Miriam Ulrickson and Mary E. Mahan.

**This Summer** saw the inauguration of a series of annual meetings of the Binney & Smith, Inc. art consultants who conduct art workshops in public and private schools throughout the country. They met in New York for discussions, talks and a general exchange of ideas and experiences in art education. In addition, the group heard talks by Dr. Edwin Ziegfeld and Dr. Mildred Fairchild of Teachers College, Columbia University and Dr. Howard Conant of New York University. They also visited art galleries, museums and art exhibits in New York City. The next meeting is scheduled for June, 1958.

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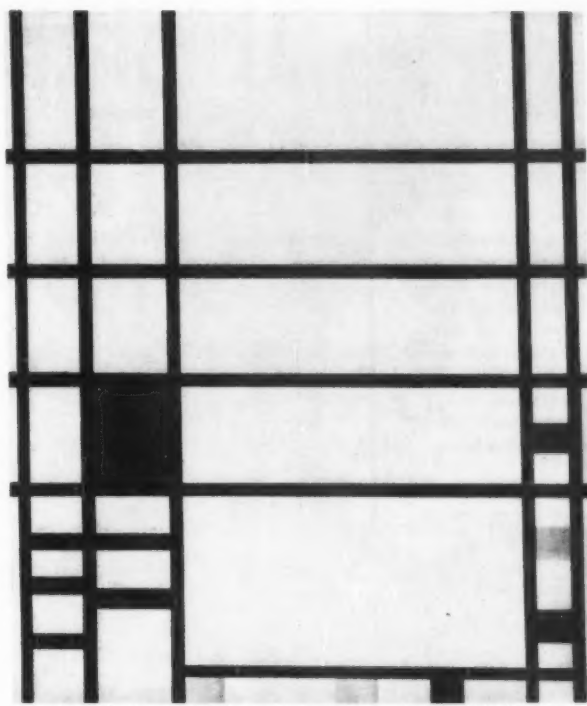
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*"Trafalgar Square" by Piet Mondrian is more than a design.*

HALE A. WOODRUFF

## Piet Mondrian, Poetry in Simple Forms

One of the most widely discussed, yet misunderstood, artists of modern times is the late Piet Mondrian. It is quite possible that his being misunderstood results in a large measure in his being so widely discussed. The directness, simplicity, and seeming formality of his manner of expression have been too easily, and erroneously, looked upon by the viewer as a way of creating "designs." And seeing only design or "nice pattern" in his works has led many to wonder why they are considered to be significant works of art. Mondrian did indeed possess an extraordinary sense of design. But he was motivated by much more than the sole desire to create good designs, however desirable this single purpose may have been.

Mondrian's art can be said to be the embodiment of a philosophy; an attitude toward the world, toward man and the culture man has created. Mondrian's use of the right angle, vertical and horizontal, black and white and the primary colors gives form to his penetrating awareness of man's structural concepts and practices; of man's relationship to his fellows and to the world; of states of mind. More specifically, the right angle, purest and most unequivocal of all angles, graphically symbolizes, in a sense, our age-old

notions of propriety and moral behavior. And a casual glance at our surroundings will reveal the almost exclusive use of the right angle in architectural and general design. Books, boxes, furniture, even the page upon which this article is printed, are designed on the right angle. The list is endless.

And it is no accident that man has arrived at this simple form upon which to base his structural enterprises. In order to function properly in a world of complexities and variables, man had to be "right" with this world. Even in the simple act of standing or walking, man is vertical with and parallel to the line of gravity. At the same time he is at right angles with the surface of his world. This sense of "fitting" and of "fitness" has always been primary and necessary to man's physical being. The need for this basic notion of fitting and fitness may have led man to the development of the rectilinear form, a form which more securely and more universally provided him with a sense of as well as an actuality of "well being." The right angle, then, is not only a fundamental mode of construction: it is also a way of existence. It is a concept, if you will, of a point of beginning, an infinitive upon which we build and extend our principles of making a life and of making things.

Mondrian's choice of colors—black and white and the primaries—derives in like manner from a basic need to establish a point of departure. Black and white are the extremes between which one may develop all the in-between values. And the primaries provide the same source for the creation of an endless range of varying colors. In a sense, then, Mondrian gave expression to "origins." His works were formalizations of circumstances, states of being, and basic principles upon which we have built and can henceforth build our forms of art and our forms of life. Herein lies the uniqueness of Mondrian.

We have long been accustomed to an art that possesses fluid brush work, suggestiveness, poetry, and nature representation. Yet, as do all great works of art, the paintings of Mondrian possess definite qualities of sensitivity, structure, empathy, even poetry. These essential ingredients of art have often been overlooked in the works of Mondrian because of the immediate impact of the precision and elegance of his style. It has not been easy, therefore, to develop a true sympathy for and understanding of the works of an artist such as Mondrian. In the final analysis, a truer understanding of ourselves, what we are and what we strive to be, is the really valid entree into the art and world of Mondrian.

Hale A. Woodruff is associate professor of art education, New York University. This feature appears in every issue.

understanding art

## Casting Tiles and Mosaics with *Castoglas*



Liquid Castoglas is a fascinating new medium which opens up an exciting and colorful world of activities to all art teachers and students. The photo illustrates the casting of colorful tiles with Castoglas by seventh grade boys. This activity is just perfect for the beginners because it is so easy to do and the results are most encouraging. A few drops of Hardener mixed with liquid Castoglas converts it into a hard tile within 30 minutes... at room temperature. Such exceptionally fine take-home items as trays and table tiles cost from 25¢ to about a dollar.



The contemporary jewelry designs shown here combine exotic woods with multi-colored Castoglas. The cloisonné pendant, for example, was made of mahogany strips and filled with Castoglas. Tiles in shades of blue-green interspersed with gold and copper mottled sections were used to create the beautiful tile table.



Three new activity manuals contain complete, illustrated directions for casting TILES, MOSAICS and JEWELRY. Nothing like it has ever been published before. All three copies will be mailed to



school art teachers for only 25¢. A special Tile Kit (Cat. No. TK-1) which may also be used for mosaic and jewelry casting, is available for \$5.65, postpaid. It includes helpful instructions and materials to get you started right. Ask for free school folder or mail your remittance or authorized school purchase order to: *School Dept. K-53.*

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## ITEMS OF INTEREST *Continued*

**Design Scholarship** Again this summer a Teacher's Design Scholarship Program was sponsored by The Art Institute of Chicago and The American Crayon Company. The work this year was typical of the high standards of creative design and technical skill which have characterized these programs in past years. And the benefits to the home territories have expanded through the volunteer-in-training courses organized by winners to share their experience with other teachers. The program is scheduled again for the summer of 1958; this time in an outstanding midwest college. Write to The Educational Department, American Crayon Company, Sandusky, Ohio for more details.

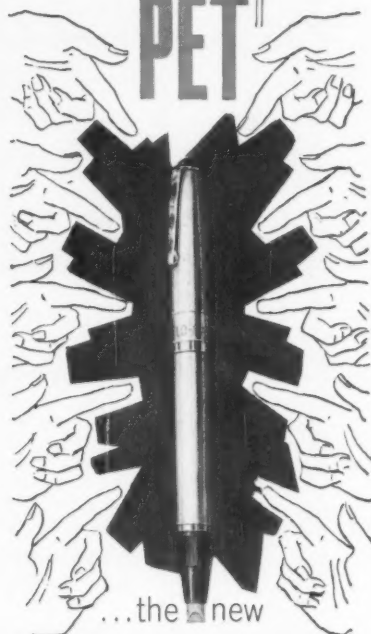


**Fluorescent Water Color** Newest item in the line of art materials manufactured by Craftint Manufacturing Company of Cleveland is Craft-Glo; fluorescent, semimodest water colors for use by children. The metal box pictured here contains eight half-pans of assorted colors: Green, orange-red, orange-yellow, cerise, chartreuse, red, orange and magenta. All colors are non-toxic and you'll find them especially effective for posters, banners, bulletin boards, and other art work where brilliant, arresting colors add interest and attract attention. Craft-Glo colors are available from your school or art supplies dealer.

**New Catalog** The new edition of the O-P Craft catalog, number 58, has recently been published, and is yours for the asking. It lists, describes and illustrates a wide assortment of craft items ready for your pupils to decorate with original designs and colorful media. Several new sizes of basswood for chip, intaglio, and profile carving have been added to the line and are listed on page 21 of the catalog. In addition, you will find many other items, manufactured especially for school use—wooden trays, bowls, shakers, plates, buttons, boxes in a wide range of sizes and shapes—to mention only a few of the items. Write O-P Craft Company, Sandusky, Ohio, on your school stationery, and ask for the new craft catalog No. 58.

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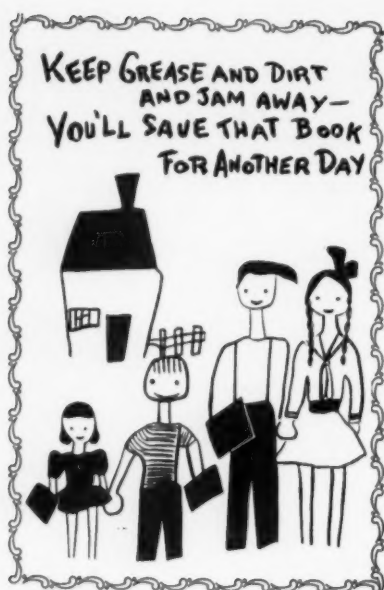
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SAY YOU SAW IT IN SCHOOL ARTS

## LETTERS

We are using this column this month to print an editorial which appeared in the *Worcester Telegram (Massachusetts)* on May 21, 1957, together with a reply published in the letters column (*Readers' Round Table*) of same paper.

**O.K., Kiddies, Let's Color** Coloring books, says a group of university specialists, destroy a child's creative instincts. The books, with their confining lines and spaces, must go. The experts are in deadly earnest about this. They point out that studies at Penn State University and the University of Southern California support the conclusion that the child brought up on coloring books will lag behind the field in later life when it comes to creative work in the arts and sciences. Instead of coloring books, advises Dr. Viktor Lowenfeld, head of the department of art education at Penn State, it is better to give children plenty of blank paper and let them work out their own designs.

Many parents will greet this doctrine with smug satisfaction. They are the ones whose children could never "stay inside the lines" anyway. Up to now these parents have been secretly worrying that their offspring were going to grow up hopelessly disorganized, with none of the old-fashioned virtues of stick-to-it-iveness and sober industriousness. This will all be changed now. No longer will these parents feel obliged to hide their happy-go-lucky little vagabonds when company comes. Just turn junior loose on the living-room rug and let him express himself. This is all very well, of course, as long as we're talking about paper and crayons. The free-expression school can make out a convincing story. But in some households we know about, that's not quite the problem. What happens when the little ones graduate to pen and ink and wallpaper, and scissors and knives and cute little Boy Scout hatchets and daddy's paint brushes (and paint)? Ah there, Dr. Lowenfeld, what do you say about that?

An Art Supervisor's Reply Your editorial writer responsible for "O.K., Kiddies, Let's Color" deserves a gold star for being especially ill-informed. The following items may be of interest to him. (1) Dr. Viktor Lowenfeld is one of the most respected members of the art-teaching profession in this country and is the author of several important books in his field. (2) Children show much more interest in staying within their own outlines than those of coloring books. (3) Art education today has nothing to do with the "free expression" of the twenties. On the contrary it encourages self-discipline in children by expecting them to organize their thoughts visually on paper. Coloring books only avoid the problem. They also set before children false standards of achievement, make them dissatisfied with their own efforts, and help to destroy their self-confidence. No one can run until he learns to walk. Pushing the pedals of a player piano doesn't train a pianist. (4) If your writer wants to learn a little more about this subject, he can check around the corner on Portland Street and visit the Davis Press, publishers of *School Arts Magazine*.

George North Morris, art supervisor, School Union 25, Holden, Mass., wrote reply.

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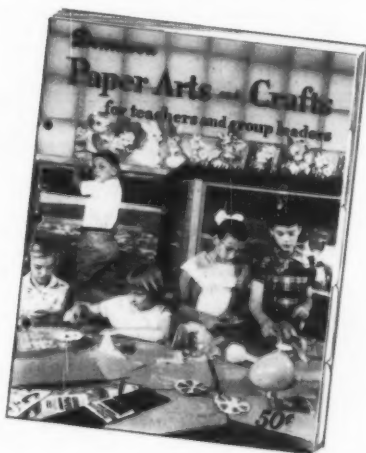
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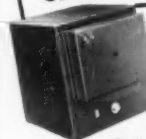
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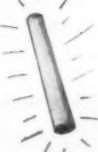
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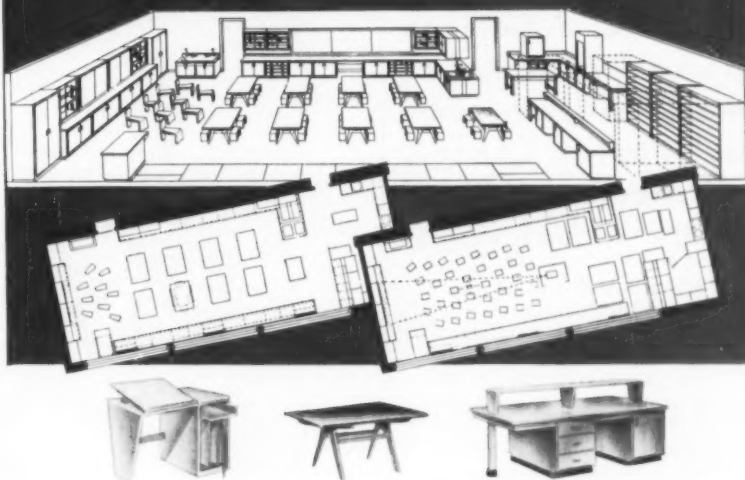
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Any theme which deals with the general field of animal protection or the prevention of cruelty, abuse, and neglect is eligible for consideration. However, it is not necessary to portray cruelty with horror or shock themes. Protection, conservation, care, appreciation for the beauty of our animal friends, safety precautions, etc., offer possibilities which may be developed in a pleasing, attractive, and thought-provoking manner. It is desirable to have a positive rather than a negative presentation.

Prizes will be given for the best poster in each group. Also those considered worthy of recognition will receive Honorable Mention. To encourage imaginative thought, originality and ideas in posters pertaining to animal care and the need for protection from abuse and cruelty, there will be several special awards. Posters may qualify in this category even though they lack artistic qualities. All prize winners will receive nationwide recognition in "The National Humane Review".

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Dr. Julia Schwartz is associate professor, Arts Education Department, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida.

## beginning teacher

### The democratic value of individual uniqueness and art education

Many teachers and school administrators recognize that each child is different from all others not only in natural endowment but in the experience he brings to situations. They recognize that in our society, in contrast to an authoritarian one, helping children to become aware of, to accept, and to work in terms of their own potentialities are valued goals of education. Though such values are acted upon by many teachers in various aspects of the school program evidence indicates that they are often ignored in the visual arts, an area which can be a particularly effective means for their realization. An example of this is the conscientious principal who was reported as confiding that he was unable to make much sense out of his art teacher's concern that "our classroom teachers do not use the children's art to help them to become aware of and to respect each other's uniqueness."

With the purpose of possibly clarifying the concept of individual differences in art for school administrators who feel as the one quoted here, a discussion of art done by adolescents will be attempted. Attention will be focused on a group of interpretations\* of ideas and feelings by seventh graders stimulated by their reading of the sports story, "The Diving Fool." Their teacher, in encouraging such expression in visual art media, was interested not only in enhancing the over-all positive feeling concerning the language arts experience but also in learning "what each one saw in the story and how they saw it."

Specifically, a person's uniqueness is indicated in his art by his choice of idea and the aspect of it he selects to point up; the symbols he creates for expressing it; and how he achieves movement and balance in organizing parts in relation to the whole. The artist in Picture No. 1 gave major attention to a symbol representing the diver about to jump. The figure in a frontal view is framed by an upright rectangular form, the diving board which interestingly enough is drawn from the top view. The feeling is one of being "up and over." Two wavy lines at the bottom of the picture space suggest water. A ladder form on the left adds interest to an otherwise simple symmetrically balanced design. The diver in mid-air heading into the pool is an important part of the work of the second artist. The diver figure through its position and form completes the circular movement of the picture plan — pool to ladder to diving board to diver to pool, etc. The feeling in Picture No. 3 is "under and stiffly sprawl." This artist, in contrast to the flat patterns created by the first two, has drawn a 3-D ladder and diving board. The three major parts of his picture are held together by textured treatment of the water. One could continue to enumerate other as yet unmentioned characteristics of these art expressions. It is clear to see how the visual arts lend themselves to a realization of individual uniqueness.

\*From Helen Dunlap's seventh grade English class, Ponce de Leon Junior High School, Miami, Florida. They take art with Marion Lovett.

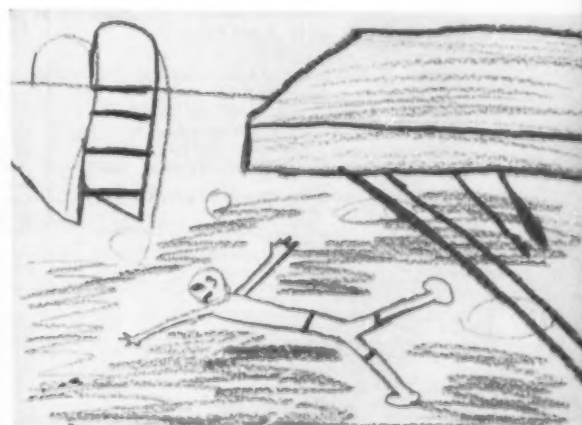
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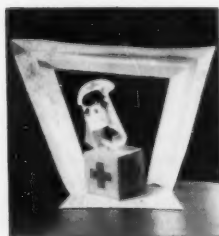


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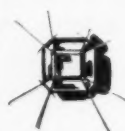
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## ART FILMS

Without a doubt TV has many sharp defined ills. Suppose we accept these problems as something we must help the industry overcome. Let us instead talk about the good things we might see on television. In this column I am going to talk about one week in TV. During this week of television watching I saw puppets, marionettes, shadow puppets. I saw puppets made out of every conceivable material. The use of rubber casting has opened up a whole new area of puppet construction and manipulation from our great favorites Kukla, Fran and Ellie to quite a realistic satire of the done on Omnibus, the range of ideas and stimulation for puppetry are great.

Have you ever seen the inside of an ant's nest, life in a bee's tree, seeds developing and planting themselves? Are you interested in the scenic beauties of Yosemite and its history? We saw Agnes De Mille and dancers creating a new dance. It was a fascinating opportunity to observe a creative personality in the process of producing a work of art. These were all available to us on Omnibus and Disney Hour. Even the Western blood and thunder productions have useful materials and new ideas. They are presented so vividly that we cannot ignore them. To bring these incidental experience areas on TV to the level of Omnibus or the Disney Hour is a major goal. Possibly one of the soundest of general interest programs is the Disney Hour. The range of material presented and the quality of presentation makes it one of the most stimulating programs that we can consistently use with children. We can be a pressure to the good if we begin to make use of the good programs that exist and ask for more of the same qualities.

Thomas Larkin, who reviews art films for our readers, is assistant professor of art and art education, University of Michigan. Address: 143 College of Architecture and Design, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

## EDMUND B. FELDMAN

Dr. Edmund B. Feldman is coordinator for the art education program at Carnegie Institute of Technology, Pittsburgh.

We Americans are becoming so prosperous that very likely we shall be redecorating our homes as frequently as we turn in our automobiles. The home periodicals urge us on with practical, ingenious, exotic, expensive or inexpensive suggestions for our dwellings. A book of this type is **Color Guide to Home Decoration**, by twenty decorators (published by Sterling Publishing Co., 1956), Price \$12.50. It is packed with full-color illustrations of dream interiors, most of which were used as advertisements, I believe, for linoleum or rug manufacturers. Everything gleams with newness, utility, durability, and that prosperous atmosphere to which so many of us would like to escape. Although this book is crammed with useful advice, I can't tell you why it leaves me depressed. Perhaps it's because it is such an accurate, technicolored picture of our middle-class dreams that I'm embarrassed. All of which reminds me that we can do a better job of teaching interior design in the schools; what is missing, I think, is not the ability to buy and assemble department store wares. What is lacking is critical judgement and the sense of fitness; both the fitness of objects in their surroundings and the fitness of objects to ourselves. This is an important goal of the art educational program, often ignored.

Two little books of British origin, **Hand-Made Jewellery**, by A. R. Emerson (Price \$2.00) and **Willow Basket-Work**, by A. G. Knock (Price \$1.00), are distributed in this country by Charles A. Bennett, Peoria. Like others in the series, the language is clear, the accent on craftsmanship is strongly evident, but the feeling for style and design as it is understood in the twentieth century is conspicuously absent. I will not labor the point beyond saying that these are good sources of technical information, but you will have to seek the creative part of the art or craft elsewhere. An unusual sort of book, really a memorial volume, is **Painting with Starch** by Walter Beck (D. Van Nostrand, 1956), Price \$10.00. In addition to a short biography of the author, founder of the Innisfree Foundation, the book contains technical notes on this medium which resembles finger painting and which Mr. Beck used with great sensitivity, his results possessing some very delicate oriental qualities.

The inexpensive booklets on drawing available to the general public, like some popular television instruction, seem capable of destroying whatever advances we can make in the schools. One by Pitman, **Drawing for Boys**, by Genevieve Vaughan-Jackson, Price \$1.00, contains lessons mainly in how to draw objects, people, animals, airplanes, bicycles, etc. The boys will copy the illustrations, I am sure, and end up no wiser or better than when they started. **Drawing for Young Artists** by Mary Black Diller, also published by Pitman, Price \$1.00, is more elementary and

## new teaching aids

more of the same. It will help keep the children quiet.

**Humorous Drawing Made Easy** by Doug Anderson (Sterling Publishing Co., 1956), Price \$2.50, is an amazing book. I have tried it on several of my colleagues, and it is not remotely funny, contains the weakest idea of drawing, and here it is between hard covers!

Nathaniel Pousette-Dart has written an ambitious book, **American Painting Today** (Hastings House, Publishers, 1956), Price \$8.50. I say the book is ambitious because it attempts to present a full picture of what is certainly a bewildering situation. The plan of the volume is to assemble reproductions of art work chosen by some fifteen museum directors and curators, since museums are presumably interested in the discovery of new talent. Mr. Pousette-Dart also offers an interpretive essay on the experiments in and influences upon contemporary art. Within the short space of this essay he does, I feel, very well. But, of course, the reader must bring a considerable background of historical and artistic knowledge in order to get the full benefit of the essay. In addition, there are statements throughout the volume by the artists represented; unfortunately, each statement is placed under the reproduction of another artist's work and this makes for confusion. The most unusual feature of the volume, however, is its reference section, containing an excellent index of artists, a good bibliography on contemporary art, a list of art organizations, and a list of art publications (including this magazine), with descriptions of their scope, policy and editorial emphasis.

As to the usefulness of this sort of book for the classroom teacher, I think it is considerable. Many of us do not have frequent opportunities to attend national exhibitions of American art and so this is a kind of substitute. We realize that nothing can compare with the stimulation received from direct experience of a work of art. But this book can meet some of our needs to be *au courant* with the art situation as a whole. During the busy school year, especially, books of this sort serve as substitutes for the visits we would like to make to the Whitney, the Modern Museum, the Carnegie International, the Metropolitan, and so on. Another consideration: art educators have a responsibility to know the current art situation and see it whole. Unfortunately, some of the art periodicals are very partisan in editorial policy and committed to particular groups of artists: they do not so much report art news as create artistic reputations. (Happily our art education journals take longer and more comprehensive views.) Hence, a book which has no partisan ax to grind performs a real service.

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ALICE A. D. BAUMGARNER

Address questions to Dr. Alice Baumgarner, State Director of Arts Education, State House, Concord, New Hampshire.

*We have in our new school nice long cork bulletin boards. I understand that cork is used because it is neutral, soft and needs no other over-all coloring or cover. But this is what some of our teachers do. They go to the expense of buying crepe paper mostly white, or some color that clashes with the color of the walls of the room and cover the whole board. In a few hours the paper has stretched and begins to sag. This makes a very tacky and unattractive bulletin board. I have suggested mounting the pictures, articles or whatever materials used on colored poster paper or board and this would give color for interest. Of course a lot depends on arrangement, balance, lettering and so forth. Some even put ruffles and scallops all around the board. To my mind this takes one's attention from the display where you should be trying to get over specific ideas or lessons. In other words the physical side of the bulletin board is emphasized and the displays are de-emphasized, therefore nothing of value is gained. Please discuss how to use classroom bulletin boards and how to decorate them if you call it decoration. Should children's written work be put on the bulletin board? If so, how arranged? Please give this discussion your earliest attention or answer personally.\* Georgia*

There is helpful material for dealing with your problem. Suppose you start by finding a space in your new school where you could install a well designed arrangement. This indirect way of teaching can be quite effective in getting results because it saves face. You lead positively by setting the stage. Perhaps you and a committee of pupils could plan an arrangement of their work and hang it in their classroom. You might instigate this by planning with one of the teachers to exhibit colorful articles you have collected in your travels. Or wouldn't it be an interesting job to work with all the pupils in a classroom organized as committees of two or three and guide each group in their planning for similar type of arrangements. The very size of the bulletin board which probably adds to the concern the teacher has for all that "big empty space" will serve you well. Each group could place its arrangement in turn and ask the other pupils for suggestions. This approach may have the additional advantage of showing how to use this long expanse by grouping and spacing, how to unify these groupings through line or color relation.

Some of these reference materials used by teachers and children will move the learning ahead more rapidly; *Planning Your Exhibit* by Lane and Tolleris, published by National Publicity Council for Health and Welfare Services, Inc., 257 Fourth Ave., New York 10, New York, 1957; *Bulletin Boards for Teaching* by Dent, Tiemann & Holland,

## questions you ask

published by the Visual Instruction Bureau, Division of Extension, the University of Texas, 1955; *Display for Learning, making and using visual materials* by East, the Dryden Press, New York 19, New York, 1952. Of help also will be such books as *Design* by Emerson, International Textbook Company, Scranton, Pennsylvania, 1953; *Lettering Techniques* by Meeks, University of Texas, 1956; *Paper Sculpture* by Johnston, The Davis Press, Inc., Worcester, Massachusetts, 1952. You can rent from Bailey Films, 6509 De Longpre Ave., Hollywood 28, California, a copy of the film, *The Bulletin Board*, an effective teaching device. This 16mm. film was recently made in color by Reino Randall. More for use with teachers you may want to purchase the filmstrip, *How to Keep Your Bulletin Board Alive*, from Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, 1950.

Let's look at other phases of your problem. What should be selected as material for display on the bulletin board? Things that can instruct—or from which the spectator can learn, or something that is aesthetically pleasing, something of significance. Such items must be arranged to catch attention. The use of line, color, spacing, movement, must be compelling enough to hold attention so that the viewer can learn. What does a pupil learn from a monotonous row of arithmetic or spelling papers? How to do his own arithmetic or to improve his own spelling? No. If there be any learning it is only that the teacher can hang papers in a straight line. Does this justify teacher's time and work? I think not. Nor do I think that the bulletin board should be used to inform Mama Smith that Johnny Jones can't spell. You say teacher selects only the perfect papers to display—and Johnny's mistakes aren't shown. Isn't he then just as conspicuous by his absence? Does this build confidence in Johnny so that he can learn more and retain easier? The teacher might be so helpful if she used this space to dramatize steps in problem solving or some phase of word building.

Another thing that may have to go through the slow process of learning is that space can be beautiful, calming, restful. Crowding and clutter can be distracting and disturbing. Refrain from the temptation to clutter the room with cute commercial cutout decorations or with rows and rows of static sameness. Instead let's give the pupils many learning opportunities by guiding them to organize their work so they can plan together to show facts graphically. Thus they can learn to appraise good design because they are working with the elements of it. They can build up an art vocabulary. They can assume increasing responsibility for the classroom.

*\*(Much as I should like to answer each question directly with a very personal letter, my regular duties keep me quite busy. A. A. D. B.)*

# Motivation and Dictation

EDITORIAL

Motivation is the process by which a skillful teacher acts as a catalyst in stimulating a child to engage in an activity because he *wants* to. Yet motivation is one of the least understood terms in our educational jargon. Confronted by the real or fancied "requirements" of the curriculum, the teacher is likely to judge her success at motivation by the results that show on the surface. Administrators help this fallacy along by evaluating the teacher according to surface evidences, how many children meet the "standard" for the grade, whether she has the class "under control," and other relative nonsense. It makes it easier for the teacher to face the superintendent, and easier for the superintendent to face the community, when the results are clearly evident in grades, percentiles, charts, and graphs. How often are teachers evaluated by the eagerness with which their children work, or by the smiles of satisfaction on their faces? Take the child who is so absorbed in his work that he is entirely oblivious of other things that are expected of him. Or the child who is so excited about his work that he forgets and smiles out loud. We have actually heard of teachers who were condemned because they "over-stimulated" their pupils.

My two-dollar dictionary tells me that motivation means "to furnish a reason for," to "stir up," and to "stimulate to action." Someone should make a study to find out *why the good child acts so good*, as well as why the nonconformist behaves as he does. Is it because the "good" child *wants* to be good, or because he is more docile, weak-kneed, and weak-minded in the face of the adversity of the teacher? Maybe he is just scared of the teacher and really isn't motivated at all. Real motivation implies that the child *wants* to do something because he understands and accepts the *reasons* for doing it. The reasons must be in terms that are meaningful and thus stimulating to the child. They must be *his reasons* for the day and place, not a long list of academic arguments. They must appeal to his own felt needs and interests, and not merely be a recital of the successes of others who did it thus and so. (You know darn well that we fail to mention those who have achieved laudable careers without doing it thus and so.) It is false motivation, and therefore false education, when the child reacts as expected only to escape ridicule or punishment, or even to please the teacher or to earn that extra dollar from papa.

Progressive education rightly swung away from the teacher-curriculum domination of the past, and placed great emphasis on motivating the child. Unfortunately, this new-found freedom has been interpreted too often to mean that the teacher functions only to keep attendance records for the

state. Progressive education is ridiculed, and we see cartoons of riotous, indifferent children, extremely busy doing nothing, while the teacher is out smoking a cigarette in her day-long "break" period. Now, this is not progressive education, and anybody who digs down into the spirit of this movement will discover that the teacher is vastly more important than ever before. True, she does much of her work in a subtle manner, but she has as many classes as she has children. She needs to know the interests, needs, and capacities of each child. The curriculum consists in providing an individual setting wherein each child is stimulated to make the most of his own personal uniqueness. And that is a large assignment! Each child needs to be motivated on his own level. The engine has to back up until it reaches the car before it can go ahead. The busy teacher today has to manipulate as many engines as there are children and pull them forward in many different directions, all at the same time—and without any stalling on the mountains.

The opposite of motivation is dictation. Here the driving force is outside the child. Here we have a dictator dictating a dictum that has been dictated by another dictator. No one would ever concede that he was a dictator, or appreciate the suggestion that his procedures are autocratic, directed, or dictatorial. Somehow, all dictators have a way of becoming convinced that they are foreordained of God according to the divine right of kings, or (more gently) that the product of the moment is more important in God's scheme of things than the feelings of the child. Every time we seek to impose a concept or an activity without taking the time and patience really "to furnish a reason for" and thus to stimulate and motivate the child we are engaging in a form of dictation. One of the best forms of motivation is praise. We have too little of it in school, and what we have is too often confined to those who conform. We need to find something to praise in every child every day, even if we have to change our spectacles. Readily available materials often motivate in themselves. The child's recognition of success is his own best motivation to other successes. No canned instruction will ever take the place of the teacher's warm smile, the encouraging word at the right moment, the little lifts over the rough spots, the affectionate pat on the shoulder or even the slight pinch on the arm that lets the student know you know *he's* there.

*D. Kenneth Winebrenner*

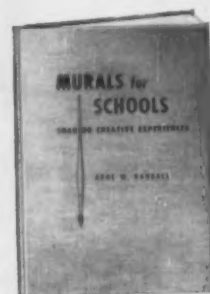


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